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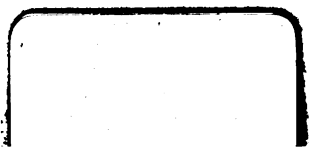
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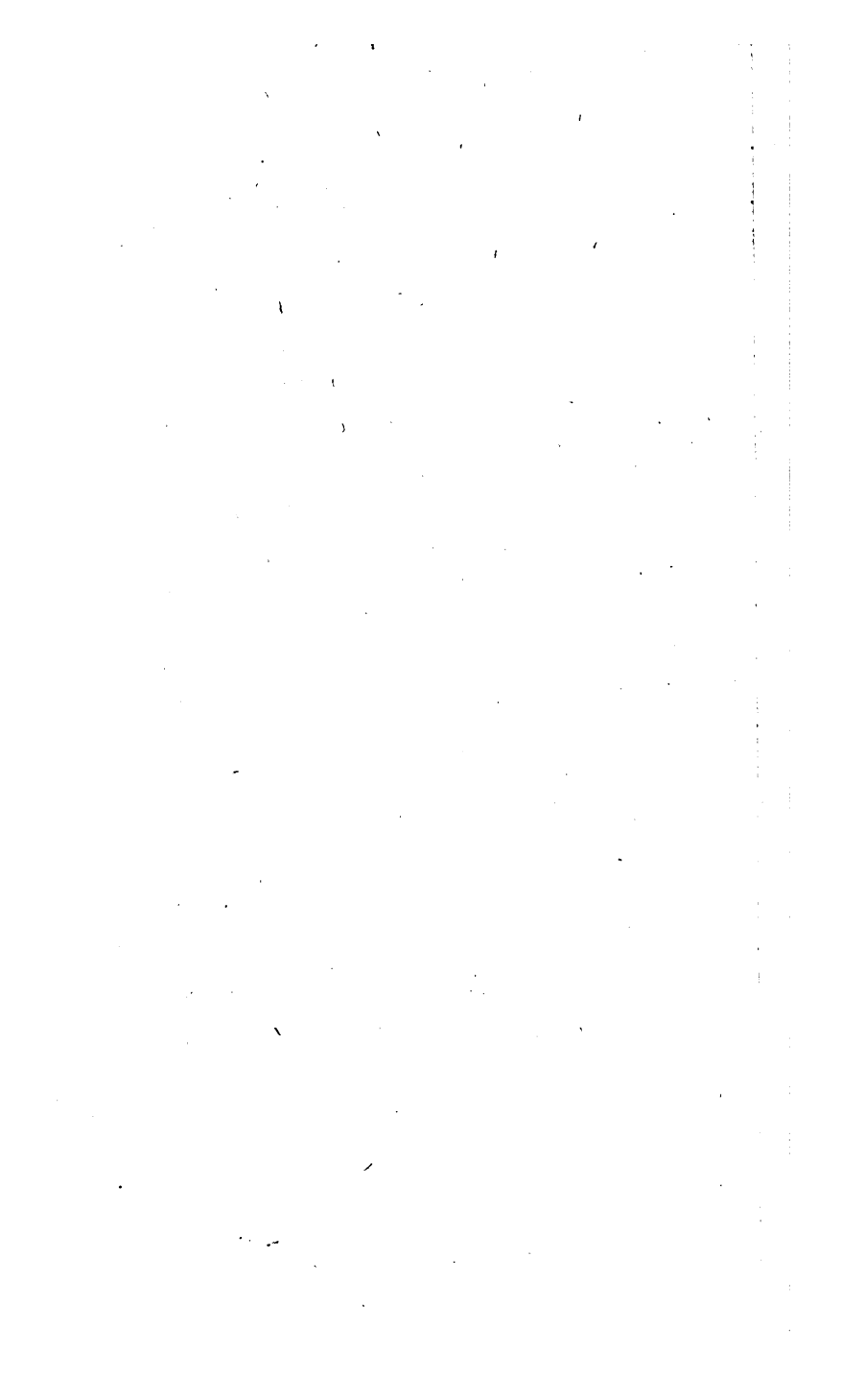


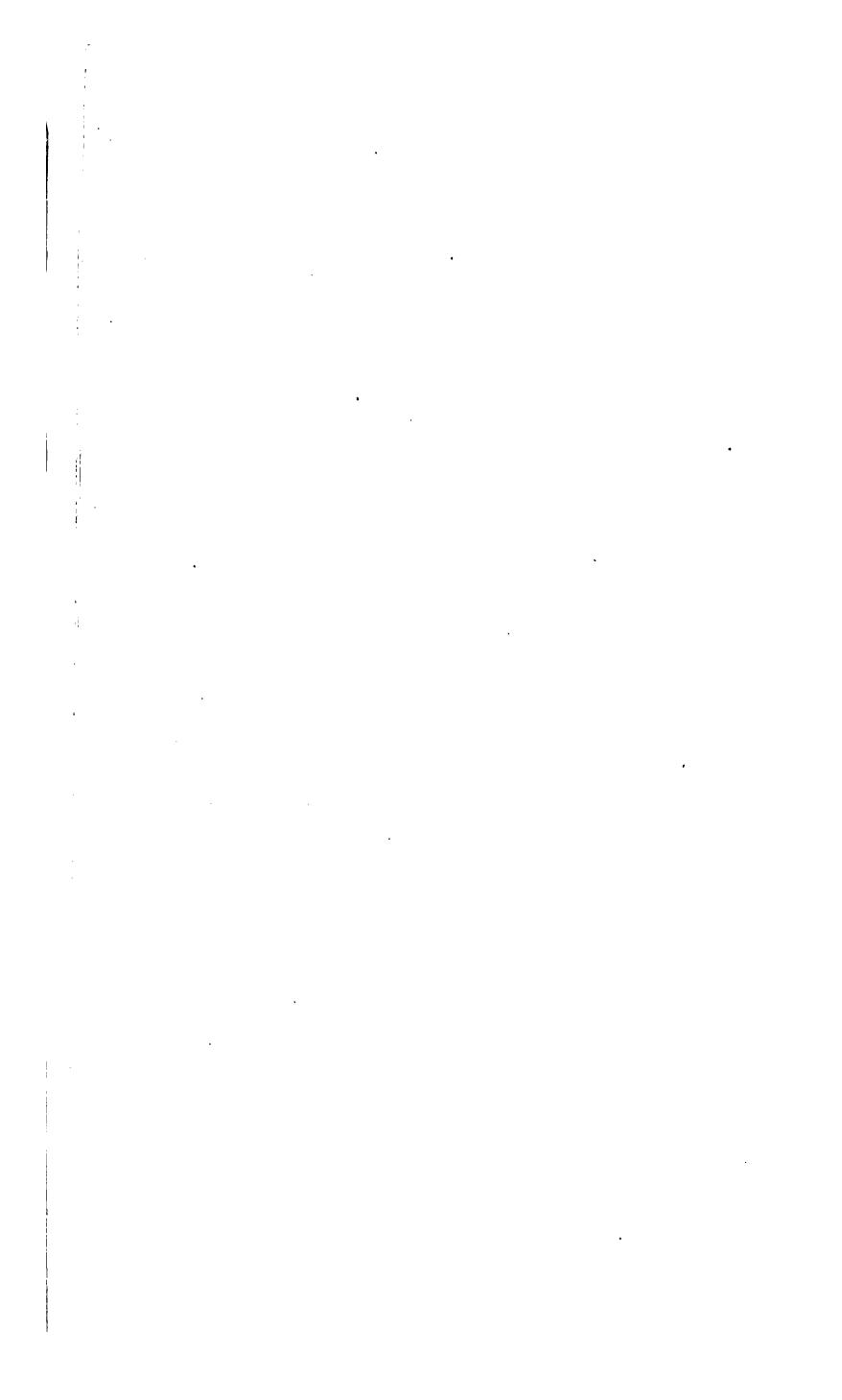
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**HARRIS'S EDITION**  
**OF**  
**SEPHORA.**

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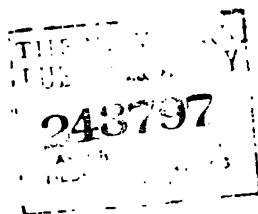
**SEPHORA;**  
**A HEBREW TALE,**  
**DESCRIPTIVE OF THE**  
**COUNTRY OF PALESTINE,**  
**AND OF THE**  
**MANNERS AND CUSTOMS**  
**OF THE**  
**ANCIENT ISRAELITES.**

**ABRIDGED AND CORRECTED FROM THE LONDON EDITION,**  
**BY REV. THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, D. D.**

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**WORCESTER:**  
**PUBLISHED BY CLARENDON HARRIS.**  
**BOSTON:**  
**RUSSEL, ODIORNE AND METCALF.**  
**1835.**

1835  
1835  
1835



W. H. & C. O.  
100 N. 4th St.  
New York

TO MR. CLARENDON HARRIS,

*Worcester, (Massachusetts.)*

I send you, my Son, the little volumes of *SEPHORA* for publication, believing that they will prove a very useful and acceptable present to the reading community.

This unassuming work gives such an exhibition of the domestic and social state of the JEWS, just before the time when our SAVIOUR entered on his public ministry, that the reader becomes in a sense contemporary. Their religious institutions, rites, and ceremonies,—the delusions of idolatry, with which some were bewildered; and the awakened expectations of the Messiah, who was to be “the consolation of Israel,” which were becoming prevalent, are set off by a graceful narrative, the incidents of which are exceedingly interesting; while the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness sheds a divine light on the closing scene.

Young people will be pleased with the story; and all, from the descriptions of places, and the delineations of manners, may derive much information, and be better able to understand many particulars in the *Gospel* which are now but little noticed.

I have taken the liberty of abridging the original in some places, and of making a few verbal corrections.—The APPENDIX, consisting principally of extracts from *Books of Travels*, has been wholly omitted; as containing matter of too modern a character, and which did not seem needed for illustration. Some few references to texts might have been made; but the reader will be at no loss to quote them, especially on a second perusal of the work, when the vehicle of fiction will have conveyed him into the regions of reality.

You know that several years ago I projected a work upon a plan somewhat similar. My purpose was to describe the *Travels through Palestine of the good Roman Centurion*; describing the country and its productions; the inhabitants, and their manners, customs and dwellings; the Temple and its religious services, with some references to the former history of the Jews; and to close with an account of the impression made by the coming of their long expected Messiah, and the effect produced by his miracles, teaching, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.—Circumstances, with the recital of which I need not trouble you, prevented my accomplishing what I had undertaken; and I regret it the less as this little work of an anonymous writer in some degree supplies its place.

Accept the good wishes of  
your affectionate Father,

THADDEUS MASON HARRIS.

DORCHESTER, (MASS.) OCT. 23, 1834.

## EXTRACT FROM THE ORIGINAL

### PREFACE.

THE era of this little story is some years after that seige of Jerusalem, which seated Herod on the throne. It attempts to give a sketch of the manners and customs of the ancient Israelites, and also a true general description of the country of Judea.

There is something interesting in the peculiar manners and customs of all nations; but those of the Jews had a twofold claim to our regard. First, as they are our spiritual ancestors, and in their religion we trace the source of that widening stream of living waters, which is finally destined to overflow and fertilize a barren world—and secondly, because even their most trivial employments, which have no connexion with *their* religion, become in some sort amalgamated with *ours*, by the frequent and familiar allusions which

are made to them in the Holy Scriptures; and in proportion as we become better acquainted with those customs from whence these sacred similies are drawn, we shall perceive a greater force and beauty in the instructions which they are designed to elucidate.

# SEPHORA.

## CHAPTER I.

ON that side of Palestine whose shores are washed by the waves of the Mediterranean, on the banks of the river Kishon, there lived one whom we call Sephora, and her father and mother Patrobus and Pythonissa.

They were in that station of life, which the wise son of Jakeh prayed might be his, when he said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." By their occupation they were basket-makers, but they also followed the pastoral life, and were the shepherds of their own flock.

The employment of a shepherd in a country and climate like this in which we live, is subject to many inconveniences, and is more pleasing to fancy than to experience; but in that happy land which the Almighty had appointed for the residence of his people, and as the type of heaven itself, the most blissful ideas of the poets, as far as concerns the beauties and fruition of nature, were more than realized.

Sephora was of a thoughtful character, lively in her affections, warmly attached to her parents, and awake to all the beauties of creation, which her highly-favored country presented in every glowing form of majestic grandeur and alluring grace. The nation to which she belonged, the place of her abode, and her manner of life, all had a strong tendency to nourish enthusiastic feelings of friendship, of devotion, and of nature; and her mind seemed to acknowledge their influence.

The cottage where this family dwelt was simple like themselves. It was built of blocks of granite, was but one story high, and was divided into six compartments.

It stood on a gentle eminence in an opening of a wood, where the fig-tree, the date, and the olive, spread their deepened shade, and gave their blossom and their fruit; while the vine festooned its branches from tree to tree in wild luxuriance, and decked them with green and purple clusters.

The humble edifice was sheltered on three sides by this wood; on the south east, a long chain of the Hermon mountains appeared above the trees, softening with the distance till the dark blue mingled with the sky.

This was the usual and most sober suit of this lofty ridge of hills; but nothing could be more beautiful, as the sun's setting beams were reflected on them, than to watch the changeful lights from their fertile base, to their craggy and snow-capped summits; they might then almost vie with the purest gems in the lustre and variety of their tints.

To the north the cottage opened on the steep banks of the river Kishon, whose rapid stream swept over its rocky channel and refreshed all the air.

Adjoining the low-roofed building, was a garden, in which all the family delighted to work, planted with flow-

ers and vegetables, where the useful and the pleasurable were mingled together, and formed a happy emblem of their lives.

This often employed them; but Sephora passed most of her days in helping her father to drive their sheep to pasture, and while they were watching them, they would sit down under the shade of trees and weave their willow baskets, when Patrobus would relate to her many parts of their wonderful history; of their being the chosen people of God; of the miracles wrought for their deliverance out of Egypt; and of the promise of a Messiah who was to be their prince and Saviour.

Sephora forgot to interlace her osiers as she listened to his words, and often did she lift up her heart to the God of heaven that she might live to see his promise fulfilled; yet she, like most of her nation, looked for a temporal prince, and an earthly power, and not for the meek and lowly Saviour, whose kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy.

Sometimes when the flock fed near their home, Sephora would take the harp on which her father had taught her to play, and chant the praises of the Almighty with an overflowing heart; while she found in those constant allusions to a shepherd's life, and that pastoral scenery, with which the Hebrew poetry abounds, a simplicity and beauty of which she would scarcely have been conscious, had she been less conversant with rural occupations, or less observant of the varying face of nature.

But Patrobus and Sephora's work did not always lie near their home; they had often far to seek for pasture for their flock, and this circumstance only added variety and pleasure to their lives.

Sephora was never in greater glee than when they had some new scenes to explore; and her father delighted to

retrace, if not to renew his own boyish feelings, when he saw the enterprising hope of youth sparkle in her eye ; and often would he go far out of their path to gratify her wishes. Gratifying her wishes, was in fact but accomplishing his own, for he knew none greater than to make her happy.

They had one day wandered far down along the banks of the Kishon, till they came to a steep rock that rose perpendicularly out of the river, and was crowned with the ruins of an old castle that had belonged to one of the former lords of the land.

Patrobus had often pointed it out to Sephora at a distance, and she had longed to examine it, but had never been near it till now.

They climbed up the rude steps of the rock, and walked through its silent and deserted courts. There is something very peculiar in the pleasure we take in looking at the ruins of ancient grandeur. The gay and glittering scenes which have passed within the crumbling grass-grown walls—the restless beings who acted in them, now quiet as their graves, and peaceful as the clods of the valley—the tumult of war and the pride of life, changed to solitude and silence. These striking contrasts arrest our passions ; we pause to remember other times, till we forget our own ; and all the vanities and all the woes of life seem to fade away before these vestiges of mouldering magnificence.

Sephora and Patrobus climbed one of the highest towers by a spiral staircase, and alarmed some sea fowl that had taken possession of it. When they were at the top, he pointed out to her the distant mountains of Golboa, where Saul and Jonathan were slain, and it brought to her recollection in a lively manner David's beautiful lamentation over them.

Whichever way they turned, some sacred subject was presented to their mind, for the whole ground over which they looked teemed with monuments of mercy, while beneath them rolled the Kishon, whose ancient stream swept away their enemies "when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera;" when the elements themselves by their "*high engendered battles*," conspired to deepen and extend the flood, so that the Canaanite "sunk like lead in the mighty waters."

But without recurring to the past, they here saw enough of the present mercies of God to fill the mind with wonder and with gratitude.

About three miles up the banks of the river, but appearing quite near, for a deep valley lay between, was their little flock of sheep, feeding under the protection of a peasant boy they had accidentally met with; and a little beyond them, on the side of a rugged hill, stood what Sephora called their rock cottage. It was a cave about eighteen feet wide at the entrance, the depth something more, and the highth considerable. It was in a rude semicircular form, but whether so shaped by art or nature was not known. It might perhaps have belonged formerly to the lords of the castle, and have been appropriated either to pleasure, or as a place of security.

When Sephora and Patrobus first discovered it, it was quite concealed by a thick shade of trees; and all the beauties of the forest seemed assembled before it. It is probable that they had originally been planted there, and young ones sprung up as the old ones decayed; but they had now the fantastic wildness of nature, and displayed in their blossom, or their fruit, all the vivid colors of the east. The scarlet pomegranate and the blushing almond, the hibiscus and the citron, the cistus and acanthus, mixed with the dark green of the cedar, the laurel, and

the myrtle, and each mutually received grace and beauty from the other.

Sephora had found this cave when she was quite a child scrambling under the trees in search of flowers. A vine grew over the greatest part of the entrance, and some of the branches had crept within clinging to the rock, and where their tendrils no longer found any thing to clasp, they hung down suspended from the sides and roof, and trailed upon the ground. Most of the light that was admitted into the cave came through the leaves of the vine, and no painted window ever yielded a more grateful gloom.

Sephora returned quickly to her father to tell him of her discovery, and at the same time that she was recounting it, eagerly took his hand and drew him towards the place on whose beauty she was expatiating.

Patrobus was scarcely less delighted with it than herself, and it cost them many a happy day's labor to convert it into a useful retreat from the noontide heat. They lopped away the branches of the trees till they had formed a commodious covered avenue to their grotto, and surely a more beautiful portico was seldom seen.

The branches of the vine that had taken possession of the cave, they fastened close to the sides of it; this was their tapestry; and for furniture they matted couches of the softest heaths on which they reposed themselves, after the eastern custom, in the heat of the day.

Sephora fancied that she did all these things herself, her little feeble hands followed her father's and did what they could, and she always looked on this place and on all belonging to it, with that peculiar prepossession of delight with which we never fail to regard the successful efforts of our own labor.

She was pleased now to see it in a new point of view from the top of this lofty tower.

Some miles beyond the cave lay the wood in which their cottage was embosomed, a smoke rising out of it betrayed the spot where it stood, and reminded them that the kind wife and mother was preparing for their return. Alas! they none of them then knew that she was preparing in vain.

They could not immediately resolve to quit the place where they were. The sun was about to set, and throwing its gold and purple gleams over the utmost verge of the Mediterranean, and Sephora waited to see it sink beneath the wave. She had never till this day had so near a view of the sea, and it filled her mind with thoughts of the great Creator and the wonders of the deep.

As the sun was sinking in the sea, the moon rose in silent majesty from the east, and thus at once presented three of the grandest objects of the creation, beautiful, and uncontaminated as when they first issued from the hands of their Maker.

The stars one after another began to appear as they cautiously descended the rock, and before they reached the bottom of the valley that separated them from their flock, the whole ether glowed with the gems of night.

Sephora's thoughts were so filled with all she had seen that she had not observed her father's unusual silence till he suddenly took her arm, and said that he felt unwell.

Every image that had before occupied her, immediately fled from her mind, and she saw nothing but Patrobus, and feared she knew not what, as she looked anxiously on his pale face which the moonlight made still more wan.

They had walked but a little way, the one tottering with fear, the other with illness, when he said he could go no

further. What an agonizing moment for poor Sephora, alone, far from the reach of human succor, without any thing to offer that might give her a hope of restoring him, she saw him sink on the earth from which he was never more to rise. She sank down too—not in despair, but in fervent supplication to her heavenly Father. Her earthly parent could not now speak, but he took her clasped hands, pressed them silently between his and looked up to heaven, while a triumphant smile enlightened his features, as if he already saw the amaranthine wreath of immortality ready to descend on his head.

Sephora was cheered by the confidence his looks expressed, and arising from the ground with greater comfort of mind and composure of spirit, immediately resolved to go in search of assistance.

She was more than a mile and a half from the sheep-fold, and most of that way was up hill; yet she ran with such swiftness that she scarcely felt her feet till she reached it. She called to the peasant boy but could not tell him what was the matter, she could only say, "my Father," and point to the way she came.

The boy went forward in that direction while she darted into the cave where they had dined at noon, and hastily caught up a jar of water, the only thing she could see that was likely to afford relief, and then returned to Patrobus with almost equal swiftness to that with which she had gone from him.

Alas! he neither knew how she came, or went, for his senses were fled. She stooped down and spoke to him, but he answered neither by word or sign; she took his hand, but it seemed insensible to the pressure of hers, she kissed his cold dewy cheek—the damp struck to her heart—she fainted and fell down by his side.

The poor peasant boy missed his road, and did not

know which way to turn, till he was guided by the moon-light falling on Sephora's waving raiment, as she ran towards the spot where her father lay.

When he came to the place, he thought for a moment that they were both gone, but the labored breathing of death soon convinced him that Patrobus at least still lived.

He had wine in his cruise, and a shepherd's drinking horn, into which having poured some, and mixing it with water, he sprinkled their foreheads, and put some to their lips. Sephora soon began to show signs of life, but not till her father's had fled for ever.

This awful moment of separation from her beloved parent was one that she had often shrunk from the thought of, as what she felt she had no strength to bear. It was now come suddenly upon her with many circumstances to heighten the distress, and she was soon sufficiently revived to know the extent of her misfortune.

She saw by the stars that it was near midnight, and felt that her poor mother must be already full of anxious thought. At length she determined on watching by the body of her father, and sending the young peasant to the cottage to say that Patrobus had been much tired and could not reach home, but if the old servant came to him, Sephora would return to her mother.

Having dispatched the messenger, she again sat down by her father, and fondly took the lifeless hand that had never been raised but to bless her. No superstitious dread alarmed her mind, and all nature seemed in unison with her sorrow and her hope. The stillness of night, when every leaf was at rest; the silent motion of the heavenly bodies fulfilling their destined courses; the bright beams of the moon illuminating the stoney valley where they were, and glittering in the rippling wave that

closed it; the purifying rush of distant waters, and the spicy-breathing air anointing and embalming the dead. What funeral chamber was ever furnished like this, or had less of terror in its solemn pomp? What departed monarch, laid out in all his kingly state, was ever so surrounded? But behold a brighter emblem now appears to cheer her patient hope. The rising sun with golden rays gives promise of that glorious resurrection morn, when friends shall meet to part no more.

The cheerful sounds of day now soon began to return, the lowing of cattle, the bleating of flocks, the tinkling of the sheep-bell, the chirping of birds, the hum of insects, and the distant noise of labor and vociferous childish joy. All these served rather to sadden than to cheer poor Sephora's heart, for they reminded her that the sound she loved best she would hear no more—her father's voice was mute.

She was giving way to that despondency which this melancholy thought inspired, when she was surprised by other notes than those of rustic life. A strain more sweet and solemn than any she had ever heard, burst softly on her ear and died away so gradually that you could scarcely say the moment when it ceased. It seemed borne on the passing gale and all again was silent.

She looked distrustfully round, but could see nothing, and she felt some of that perplexity of thought which peculiar situations will excite in almost any mind. She doubted whether she had really heard, and if she had, she doubted still more to which world those sounds belonged. Soon however they returned with more distinctness and increasing clearness, and came nearer and nearer to her till the soothing notes changed all at once to horrid screams and rending shrieks.

Sephora started, and looking at the hill above her head,

saw on the summit the funeral bier with the attendant minstrels, and her poor mother with rent garments and dishevelled hair, beating her breast, and using all those violent expressions of grief which were customary though forbidden to their nation.

The peasant boy had done as he was told, but the affections are vigilant and suspicious. The anxious wife saw that he had not told her the whole truth; his evasive answers when questioned confirmed her in this notion, and she did not rest till she had made him declare all, and more than all she most dreaded to hear.

Sephora ran to meet her mother, and threw herself into her arms. Her heart was too full to speak, but she bathed her bosom with her silent tears.

Pythonissa was astonished at the composure of her grief, and thought it insensibility; but she had hopes that her poor mother knew not of.

They now again moved forward, the minstrels playing and chanting the solemn songs of death, till they came to where the corpse lay, when they again uttered the same frantic shrieks of woe as when they first beheld it from the heights.

This formal ceremony over, they took up the body and prepared to move it to his house. The widow went first with all the gestures of grief in her action, and much of its oppressive weight at her heart. Sephora silently followed the bier, feeling that though her earthly joys were cut short, her father and her hope were both in heaven.

As they passed by the cave, the scene of so many happy days, she could not restrain her sobs and tears. The sheep who were still grazing before it, seemed to forget their food as the mournful procession passed, and looked up with heavy eyes, as if they knew who it was that was slowly borne along, while the faithful dog who had all

night been guarding the flock, jumped whining on the bier, licked his master's hands and face, and scarcely could the minstrels drive him off, while he mixed with theirs his untimed notes of woe.

When Sephora came near the cottage she trembled exceedingly. She had never yet approached it but with a dancing heart; and the sad contrast, the thousand conflicting thoughts of home-born joys now past, and tedious days to come, rushed at once upon her mind; and when she saw her beloved father's pallid corse borne through their rose-clad porch, she fell senseless to the ground. The minstrels here again set up their funeral cry. As for the poor widow, she felt so overpowered, that she forgot all the forms of woe.

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## CHAPTER II.

BUT leaving the further description of a wife and daughter's sorrow on the first amazement of grief at the loss of a husband and a father, let us pass on to the time when it was somewhat familiarized to their minds. And here poor Sephora's grief might be almost said to begin, or at least to assume a new character. At first, the thought of her father's happiness had almost raised her above the reach of sorrow. But though her confidence on this subject had not at all abated, yet its influence on her mind had very much decreased, while she every day

became more and more sensible of the greatness of her loss.

Her former employments were now all over, or if not over, failed to give delight, and time which used to be gladdened by constant occupation, now was sad as it passed.

Sephora felt that in yielding to this corroding grief, she was giving way to that proud spirit which refuses to be happy but in its own way. She called herself severely to account for not having resisted the indulgence of those selfish feelings. She considered that this world is a world of trial and not of uninterrupted enjoyment, and she earnestly prayed that she might both see her line of duty, and be able to fulfil it.

Her prayer was heard, and soon the approving voice of conscience whispered in her ear, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'

She now devoted the whole of her life to her mother, and in seeking her comfort she found her own, which she once thought was gone for ever. She was now watchful over all her actions, she forbore to do any thing that seemed to excite too tender a sorrow, and to enfeeble her mind.

Sephora's mother was a much less amiable character than her lost parent; her temper was bad, she was generally complaining, and she had but little of that instinctive tender affection which seems the peculiar gift of mothers. She had altogether been more a source of grief than happiness to her husband: not on account of these infirmities of disposition, for he, through divine grace, had so far conquered his own, as to be able to bear cheerfully with hers. But what grieved him, was, that he knew her heart was not right in the sight of God.

He had one day, a few years after they were married,

been to the city of Nain, to take his baskets, and on his return he was tempted to trace the course of a stream, and explore a part of the country he had never seen before.

It led him up a narrow glen that seemed as if it had been rent asunder by some sudden convulsion of nature. As he advanced, it grew wilder and wilder, and assumed a character of savage beauty he had rarely seen before. Probably the foot of man had seldom visited it, for the birds of solitude seemed to have taken it for their own. The owl, the osprey, and the eagle, fled at his approach; the trees seemed almost coeval with the rocks on which they grew; and at times their meeting branches cast the deepest gloom on the dark slow stream beneath.

He had walked on several miles and had made so many turnings that he was lost in conjecturing where it would lead to, when he found the glen abruptly terminated by a steep mountain that raised its head high above the neighboring rocks, and was crowned by a grove of ancient palm-trees, while the stream whose course he had been pursuing, broke over the top of it with the most impetuous grandeur and raised a cloud of foam. He was lost in wonder at the scene, and though he knew not whether he was advancing nearer home or receding farther from it, he immediately determined to climb the height. As he got near the top he heard strange noises which he could not account for, but his surprise soon changed to horror and pity when he saw an idol raised up on high, and a multitude of deluded people offering sacrifice with songs and dances, and all the mysterious rites of iniquity. His heart sickened at the sight. What then must his emotions have been, when he saw amongst the crowd his wife and infant child. His agony was so great, that Pythonissa appeared touched with remorse,

and solemnly promised never to attend any of those assemblies again. She kept that promise, yet Patrobus had reason to fear that it was more from regard to him than to God.

Though this discovery of his wife's idolatry, shed bitter into his cup of life, yet he was thankful that he knew of it ; for it made him much more careful than he otherwise would have been to take every opportunity of instilling true religion into the mind of his child, and it made him keep her more constantly with himself than he would have thought it right to have done, had her mother been equally disposed to lead her in the way in which she should go. He vigilantly detected, and affectionately exposed every evil principle of action, however playfully concealed beneath all her winning ways of childhood, and taught her to consider no thought, or word, or deed, as too trivial for the notice of God. Thus Sephora owed her earliest lessons of piety to her father ; he formed her infant mind, and the Almighty blessed his labor and breathed into it the breath of life.

Pythionissa thought he gave himself a great deal of unnecessary trouble in all this, yet she herself had reaped, and was now reaping, in a more especial manner the fruit of those instructions which she secretly despised.

Sephora's continual thought was how to make her mother happy. She endeavored to appear cheerful, that she might not excite her jealousy, by giving her reason to suppose that all her own happiness was buried in her father's tomb. She resolved, if it were possible, not even to see her parent's failings, and studiously to avoid every thing that had a tendency to irritate her temper ; to take upon herself all the domestic cares that seemed to fatigue her, and to try once more to spread an air of contentment and peace round their desolate dwelling. These

were the resolutions that she formed, and for being able to fulfil them, she trusted in him from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works must proceed. Her neighbors, and even Pythonissa, whom it was difficult to please, acknowledged that she fulfilled her filial duties perfectly, and doubted not but that God would bless her for it; while she herself felt there was so much of sin even in her best actions, that they must shrink from the observation of infinite purity, and call for mercy rather than reward.

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### CHAPTER III.

SEPHORA had soon no need to make an effort to appear cheerful, for she really was so, and in resigning herself entirely to the will of God, and striving to do the duties of that station in which she was placed, she found an animated peace that must be felt to be understood.

She was now full of household cares, she pressed the olive for its oil; and the grape for its gladdening juice; or dried its gathered clusters in the sun. She drew milk from the flock; cast her net into the stream; took honey from the hives; and cleansed their raiment in the brook.

This last employment, by which many of our menials would think themselves degraded, was formerly among the occupations of king's daughters: and Sephora was never better pleased with her day's work, than when she

unloosed their little ass from its crib, saddled him with paniers of her own and her father's weaving, laded him with their clothes, and taking a basket of provisions in her hand, drove him before her down a steep narrow path in the wood at the back of their cottage which descended into a deep valley that was watered by a soft clear stream.

Nothing could exceed the romantic beauty of this vale, and none more difficult to describe.

The variety of images with which it was crowded, and the confusion and irregularity with which they were thrown together, made them look more like the *dream*, than the work of nature.

The place where Sephora began her work was in a nook covered with flowers, and shaded by olive and fig-trees, where the water formed a natural basin.

Here she unloaded her ass, and left him at liberty to feed while she performed her task. He generally disclaimed the delicacies under his feet, and roamed away in search of rougher fare. It was not necessary to limit his wanderings, for kind treatment had taught him always to come when he was called; and as soon as her work was done, and the rocks resounded with the name of Emmor, he would leave the half-tasted thistle, and immediately obey the voice of his mistress. She had taught him to do this when a child, by always rewarding him when he came to her, with a handful of parched corn.

Sephora always paused in her work at noon, when heat and labor made rest doubly grateful; and, reposed on her shaded flowery couch, she ate her simple, solitary meal, with a grateful heart, and contemplated, with admiration, the surrounding scenery.

The stream which glided peacefully by her, was the natural proprietor of the valley, but soon two bold usurp-

ers from either side came down to claim possession of the sylvan realm.

The right hand flood made the more insidious attack, first conducting its stream obliquely, then hiding its course beneath the crowding myrtles, then dashing furiously over a bold projection of the rock that would have impeded its course, and descending the remainder with a somewhat gentler motion, half concealed, and half revealed, by the fresher verdure of the shrubs through which it passed. While its daring antagonist, by two bold steps which hollowed out the rock, at once entered the scene of contest, and its angry foam recoiling on itself, seemed to try to reach again the height from whence it fell.

Pendant trees, dishevelled shrubs, and nodding rocks, looked as if they had come crowding and tumbling one upon another, to witness this war of the streams; while repeated echos, like the voice of fame, sent the rumor from cliff to cliff, and carried the tidings down the peaceful vale.

Sephora, when rested from her fatigue, and somewhat satiated with beholding this *moving* landscape, would often take the empty basket, in which she had carried her dinner, and walk by the margin of the brook to gather balsamic herbs, with whose medicinal virtues she was well acquainted, and afterwards taking them home, extract their juices.

Most of the remedies used in that country were of the healing kind; they had but little occasion for any other, for where the art of cookery was scarcely known, and the inhabitants almost lived in the open air, diseases were but few.

She had one day wandered some way up the vale searching for her herbs, when, on turning a projection of

rock, she came to a spot which she well remembered, from having once reached it with her father by a different path through the wood, and they were then both so struck by the sudden variety of beauty that it presented to their view, that they almost simultaneously began to recite the same piece of poetry, in praise of the creation and the Creator; and it added a reciprocal sympathy of joy, even greater than that they received from the charms of nature, to find that there was that entire communion of feeling in their minds, that the very same words gave utterance to the thoughts of both.

The Hebrew poetry was usually recited in alternate measures. It had peculiarities that were all its own; it was so exquisite that the saddened soul revived at its sound, and it was consecrated to devotion, and never debased by any meaner theme.

Sephora was affected by the recollection of her former feelings, at thus finding herself unexpectedly on this spot, and she almost unconsciously began the same poem she had spoken there with Patrobus, but when she had finished the first stanza, she stopped. The thought of her father's responsive voice stifled hers; she leaned against the rock, and could say no more.

A silence of something more than a minute succeeded, when a soft inarticulate sound of the sweetest cadence, and of the same metre as that in which she had recited, seemed to reply in answering notes of praise. She repeated the third stanza, and after a pause, was again answered by the same aerial voice. She knew that this could be nothing but the reverberation of her own; yet she pleased herself with thinking that it sounded like her father's, and only reciting the intermediate verses, fancied that he replied.

Some, perhaps, would blame her for gratifying herself

in this wilful delusion; but who is there that has not at times suffered their imagination to predominate over their reason, and made themselves happy by some waking dream?

She did not long indulge herself in this reverie, for the western sun, casting its blush down the yale, told her it was time to return. She hastened back, and gathering up her scattered clothes from the rock, laid them smooth in the paniers. She had no need to call Emmor, for it being past the usual time of going back, he was waiting for her, and had helped himself to the accustomed boon which she never failed to reserve for him out of the basket store.

They now both slowly ascended the winding and obscure path through the wood. All nature was hushed, except two answering nightingales that seemed singing as if for victory of harmonious sound. One would have supposed that the bodies of such little creatures must have expired under such loud, such clear, such redoubled, such mellifluous strains.

"What," thought Sephora, "must be the music of the seraphic choir in heaven, when sinful man on earth is entertained with such melody as this?" Then the idea that her father was now of that sacred band came to her mind, and drew her into a train of thought with which she was familiar, and from which she could not disengage herself, till the spell was broken by stepping at their cottage door.

Then she took off the paniers, and trusted Emmor to find his own way to his crib, while she ran to her mother, impatient to see her after an absence of so many hours.

A smile for a moment lightened up Pythonissa's countenance on her daughter's approach, but it was soon gone, and she was soon wrapped in more than her accustomed gloom.

Sephora strove all she could to dissipate it, but did not succeed. She set out their simple meal with more than common form, adorned the table with the freshest flowers, showed her the basket of herbs she had gathered, pointed out their beauty, and their use, and told all the little circumstances of the day.

But her mother heard as if she heard her not, and her mind seemed revolving other thoughts.

Sephora, finding that her own adventures and Emmor's failed to excite any interest, and still hoping to rouse her from her grief, innocently asked her what she had been doing while they were away?

This question, did, indeed, route her; she started as if detected in guilt, made some vague general answer in a hurried angry voice, and after changing the subject, and assuming, for a few minutes, the appearance of cheerfulness, again relapsed into gloom.

Sephora next took her harp, played her most soothing and her liveliest airs, and looked inquiringly into her mother's face, to see which attracted her attention the most; but both seemed alike to her. In fact, she heard neither the one nor the other, or if the notes reached her ear, they certainly never touched her mind, which was far differently moved than by the "concord of sweet sounds."

Sephora thought she had observed before this, that on the evening of those days when her occupations obliged her to be absent from home, she had, on her return, found Pythonissa more than usually depressed, and she had often earnestly entreated her to go with her, told her how much more she should enjoy the refreshment of her walks, and how much happier she should be at her work if she had her dear mother sitting by her. And when it was done, how much more comfortable it would be if

they had their meal together, instead of each dining alone.

She hoped, by thus putting it, as if she chiefly desired it for her own gratification, to induce her to comply. But she invariably refused her request; and what was extraordinary, though Sephora found her gloom increased after absence, yet Pythonissa never seemed so satisfied, or so near being cheerful, as when her daughter was going to leave her for the day. This continually lightened and cheated poor Sephora's heart with the hope that her mother was going to recover her spirits.

She never doubted but that it was grief for her father's loss that cast this gloom over her mind; she felt how nearly she had herself fallen into a state of listless despondency; she knew by experience how difficult a thing it is to break the habit of grief; and remembering with gratitude the relief which seemed to have been granted to her sorrow in answer to prayer, she resolved the first opportunity to ask her what it was that hung so heavy on her spirits, tell her what the state of her own had been, where she had found alleviation, and urge her also to seek the only true balm for a wounded mind.

These resolutions were easily made, but there was something so repulsive in her mother's manner, that to accomplish them was no easy task, yet she constantly bore the intention in her thoughts, and only waited for a time when she could do it with the least fear of giving offence.

Sephora's mother had never been dearer to her than since this dejection had fallen on her mind, though it was accompanied by an increased apathy of manner towards herself. She this evening felt unusually anxious about her. The hopes she had indulged in the morning were not only gone, but worse fears succeeded them,

which prevented her from sleeping after she had retired to rest, and she kept revolving sad thoughts in her mind, when she was startled by some of the most dismal sounds she had ever heard. They were so different to any that had ever reached her ear before, that she could not even imagine what they were like. She got up and went towards the windows, which in that country are seldom shut; she looked out, but could see nothing unusual. Her room faced the south, the moon shone bright, and the dark shadows of the boughs of the trees falling across each other, gave a more intricate and doubtful appearance to the wood, but nothing seemed to move. Yet here she heard the noises still more distinctly, and they sounded even more strange than they had done before, and seemed less like any thing belonging to the earth.

She trembled exceedingly, and felt herself giving way to a very unbecoming terror, when remembering where her strength lay, and who it is that has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you;" she asked of him, whose omnipresence she seldom forgot, to guard her from all danger and to keep her from the fear of it; and she soon felt a real composure of spirit which heroes have sometimes only seemed to possess in the hour of doubt and danger.

It now struck her that it might be some bird which had made this noise. She remembered being very much surprised the first time she heard the dismal notes of the Cucuvaia, when walking late with her father among the rocks, and that he had reproved her for being alarmed, and told her to fear God, and then she need fear nothing besides.

The noise continued at intervals for more than half an hour, but Sephora having in some measure satisfied her mind as to what it might be, lay down again without in-

quietude, though not with much disposition to sleep. The recollection of the screech owl, brought before her mind the day when she heard it. She remembered getting up when the mists were not yet cleared from the earth, and going down the steep rocky banks of the river to fetch the bundle of osiers that had been soaking in the stream: then coming into the cottage and putting up their noontide repast, preparing breakfast and sitting down to it with her parents, while the clustering roses oppressed with dew, looked in at the window, but saw no tear or cloud of grief on those within. All then were cheerful and happy, about to separate to their different tasks. Pythonissa to her household cares, and Patrobus and herself to the tending of the flock; each hoping when their work was done to meet again in peace, and end the day as they began it, with prayer and praise.

Memory, almost saw again the dew drops on each flower, and leaf, and spray, as they unpenned their flock and drove them down to pasture;—wove afresh the baskets that must now have fallen to decay—and sat under the shade of leaves long since mingled with the dust, while her father's conversation was imprinted in still more indelible characters on her heart. She had this day got him to recount to her the earlier part of his life, when he had been called by Antigonus to fight the enemies of his country and resist the claims of Herod to the throne. How did she shudder at the perils he had passed, as he recounted to her the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, and the inhuman butchery that ensued after it was taken, when neither youth, nor age, nor sex found mercy; when the beautiful and virtuous Mariamne failed to calm or mitigate her husband's fury, and rage got the empire of the most idolatrous love.

It is true, that Herod was so far influenced by her en-

treaties, as to command the carnage to cease ; but as this was the only order he ever issued in vain, it was supposed that he secretly approved what he appeared to disclaim. Patrobus had himself escaped by being concealed by some old furniture, while the work of death was going on all around him, and the shrieks of agony, despair, and woe pierced his very soul. In the room where he was hid, he saw a waking infant stretch forth its little arms to meet his advancing murderer, and smile at the ensanguined, glittering sword, wet with a mother's blood, and raised to shed its own—yet it found no mercy. And when the dreadful silence, succeeded to the rage of death, and by its awful stillness proclaimed the last enemy's unresisted empire—when he crept out from his concealment, the sights which he witnessed made him almost wish himself out of such a world.

The first object he saw was that disfigured infant on its gory bed, whom he had so lately seen with all the freshness of an opening flower ; its laughing eye now changed to dimness, and its dimpled smiles to the convulsive mortal pang. He went out of this room only to enter others that presented even greater spectacles of horror. Slain families were heaped together, children on the mangled bodies of parents that had vainly tried to protect them—wives in their lifeless husbands' arms ; while the pallid hue of death, and the crimson stain of murder added their dreadful contrast to render the scene yet more striking and more full of woe.

Sephora sickened at the recital, and the life that was so near being lost, seemed dearer to her than before, while the God who had preserved it in battle, and sheltered it from the rage of the destroyer, was more than ever precious to her soul.

Patrobus said, that he had met but with one mischance

during the siege: a slight wound on the shoulder from one of the Roman arrows; and this he considered more as a blessing than as a misfortune, as it had introduced him to a friend, who till he married, was the companion of his heart; but since then, added Patrobus, though Vashni is settled on mount Carmel, yet we have rarely met. I believe, Sephora, it is you who have made me so willing to neglect all my former friends. I was thinking last night when I was reading Nathan's parable, that in saying the poor man's lamb was unto him as a daughter, the prophet beautifully expressed in one word every idea that could be conveyed, of endearment, of solace, and of love. Sephora could not be insensible to expressions of affection and approbation from the lips of such a father, yet the indirect praise his words conveyed, humbled, rather than exalted her, and the tear of gratitude and humility fell on his hand, while she felt herself utterly unworthy of such a parent.

Patrobus again reverting to the siege of Jerusalem, told her that it was impossible to describe the general consternation when it was taken, and that, not merely on account of the loss of it, or the cruelties that were exercised, but because of Herod's being established there as King. In all the various punishments which had been inflicted on them for running after the abominations and idols of the surrounding nations and forsaking the living God, the throne of Judah had never before been filled by a stranger. But while this circumstance struck the greater part of their nation with dismay, he himself, and many others looked upon it as a happy omen of the speedy fulfilment of prophecy, and that the departing of the sceptre from Judah was a token that this was the reign in which the Messiah would appear.

Patrobus then spoke of the conquests of Alexander, and

told her that the place where they then sat was still called the victor's plain, in memory of his having halted there for a few hours, more than three hundred years ago, when he was on his way from Tyre to Jerusalem, where he was going to chastise their nation for refusing to submit to him, and for having nobly answered that they had sworn allegiance to Darius, and could not to another. Alexander having reached Gaza, the Jews hoped he had passed them by, but they were seized with the utmost consternation, when they saw this resistless conqueror, before whom the world seemed to yield, turn again, and come pouring down like a destroying flood on their defenceless city. Defenceless shall we call it? Who is so defended as those whom the Almighty surrounds with his shield? To him they went in this hour of need, and from him they received succor.

Jaddua, the high priest, being divinely warned, dressed himself in his pontifical robes and ornaments, the priests in their vestments, and the people in white garments, and issuing out at one of the gates of the city in solemn procession met his approach on the heights of Sapho that overlooked the town.

Their appearance was singular, but what was the astonishment of Alexander's army to see the insulted conqueror who was come to kill and to destroy, prostrate himself before the high priest, and worship the incommunicable name he bore on his forehead. Then it was if ever, that he was truly great.

Parmenio, who knew that the hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, and that he turneth them as seemeth him good, asked him with surprise, how it was that he who was adored by every one, adored the high priest of the Jews? To whom he answered, "I do not adore him, but the God whom he worships. For when I

was at Dio, a city of Macedonia, while I consulted with myself of the conquest of Asia, I saw in my sleep this man attired as he now is, who bid me go boldly forward and assured me of victory."

Alexander then gave his hand to the high priest and entered the city in the midst of the procession, where he offered sacrifices to the only true God. And when he was shown the prophecies of Daniel, which speak so circumstantially of him and his victories, his confidence of overcoming the Persians was abundantly confirmed, and he joyfully bid the Jews ask of him what favor they would.

Thus the hours passed on in conversation that interested them till it was time to pen the flock in their fold, when Sephora claimed her father's promise of showing her the rocky dale of Bethshan, where tradition reported, that a great king formerly had his palace, who once making a banquet, and inviting to it all the sorcerers of his country excepting the chief of them, who was so stung with rage and jealousy at the neglect, that he turned the palace, the river that ran before it and all within it, and about it into stone. But the familiar spirits that possessed the sorcerers, not being susceptible of such transformation, they were often heard wailing and complaining in the rock.

This story was considered as a mere fable by the most illiterate; yet Sephora found it impossible to disunite the recollection of it from the place, and while her reason utterly disclaimed the marvellous tale, her imagination certainly felt its secret, though almost unacknowledged influence.

The place was a heap of naked rock, where the blade of vegetation never grew, though surrounded on all sides by fertility. After walking some way through a chasm,

they got to a more open place, where the rocks on one side bore some rude resemblance to the gigantic buttresses of the castle. And here it was that she started at the sound of the Cucuvaia's ory, and was chid by her father for her foolish fear. Thus memory, the great magician of the mind, brought back the past and lived it o'er again.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

SEPHORA determined not to say any thing to her mother of the mysterious noise she had heard in the night; she thought it might have a bad effect on one already so disposed to melancholy, and as Pythonissa had often assured her that she slept perfectly well, she hoped she might not have heard any thing of it herself.

Having settled this, her busy weary thoughts soon began to lose themselves in forgetfulness; she was now with her father in more uncertain scenes, saw the flowery mead suddenly transformed into a mazy wood, while as often as she cleared the sheep from its labyrinths, some scaring sound would drive them back—then they were all penned fast within the fold, and she wandering round and round, unknowing how to let them out.

She had slumbered on for many hours past her usual time of rising, when she was roused by her mother's opening the door, and asked with a look and tone of

more solicitude and affection than she had lately known, if she was well?

Joy and hope sprung like light to Sephora's bosom at hearing again something that sounded like the kindness of a parent's voice.

On her answering she was well, but had not slept the beginning of the night, Pythonissa's looks were again overclouded with gloom, while she cast her dark penetrating eyes with the most suspicious and inquisitive expression on her daughter's countenance, as if she would have read her inmost thought; but finding nothing there but sorrow, that her mother should be still such a prey to grief, she sat down buried in deep and gloomy meditation; when Sephora, throwing herself on her knees before her, and taking her hands within her own, said, "Oh, my dear mother, how can you suffer these thoughts to oppress you? I think I know what you feel, for I was once myself so near sinking into this state."

"You, Sephora! when?" exclaimed Pythonissa, as she started back and pushed her from her with surprise, with a smile, (if that could be called a smile, which had in it more of malignancy than benevolence) distorted her features.

"When, mother!" said Sephora, meekly, "when my poor father died, and for some months after; but I felt, that to indulge in such sorrow was to rebel against the decrees of God. I asked to be delivered from it, and he burst the cords of grief that bound my soul. I asked him to show me the way wherein I should go, and he became a light to my paths. Pray to him to comfort you as he has comforted me—pray to him for his Holy Spirit—pray to him that you may more entirely place your trust on that promised Redeemer, who will make "reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in an everlasting righteousness."

"No," said Pythonissa faintly, "I cannot pray:" and she rose to go, but Sephora detaining her hands, said, "Do you say, that you cannot pray, my mother; Oh then I beseech you, as I would if I saw the yawning gulph of destruction opening beneath your feet, that you go not out of this room till you have fallen down before the Almighty, and asked him for a new heart and a new spirit. Ask it as a famishing soul would a morsel of bread; ask it as a condemned criminal would sue to his monarch for his life. His is a throne of royal mercy, at which none ever begged in vain. Our God is long suffering, ready to pardon, and slow to anger, of great kindness, and not willing that any should perish."

Pythonissa seemed much agitated, and said with great emotion—some other time; I cannot now, indeed I cannot now, Sephora.

Her daughter did not dare to detain her any longer; but when she had left the room, she poured forth the fervent desires of her own soul, and by petitions washed in tears and urged by sighs, carried her reluctant mother to the gates of heaven.

The consciousness of having performed a painful and difficult duty which she had long wished to discharge; the hope that her prayer might be heard, and above all, the comfort she felt from having cast her care upon one who was able to succor her, shed unutterable peace over her mind, and she arose from her knees, serene, consoled and invigorated.

The sun, in the material world, when he calmly breaks forth after the lowering storm is past, and sheds his radiant beams on all the myriad liquid gems of light, when nature puts on more than the freshness of her vernal beauty; when every herb yields incense, and the air is all one mingling mass of breathing sweets;—even this

conveys but an imperfect image of that joyful renovation which the mourning soul experiences, when it has carried all its sorrows, and laid them on the bosom of its God.

When Pythonissa and Sephora met, they said but little, and neither of them reverted to what had passed. No two minds could exhibit a more complete contrast than theirs did this morning, the first all tumult, and the last all peace.

It shows how little happiness consists in exterior things, for in regard to these they were both alike. It also shows how easily a hurrying world, that only looks for happiness where it sees a glare, may be mistaken in the judgment it forms of the wretched and the joyful. Pythonissa, notwithstanding the commotion of her mind, seemed less sad than usual. The very conflict of her soul took off from that dark stillness of thought that usually involved her; while her daughter felt such a heavenly calm within her breast, that a casual observer might have mistaken the profoundness of her peace for a rooted sorrow.

Sephora's work lay this day in her garden, which lost all its superior neatness when Patrobus died. For many months after that event it was entirely neglected; and when Sephora first entered it, she thought she saw in it an image of her own disordered mind. Here the hasty growing weeds had quite usurped and overwhelmed the ground where the useful vegetable had been sown. There, the unsustained rank crops had fallen to the ground in heaps on each other, matted and decaying by their own luxuriance. The smooth mown walk, now waving with grass; the gardening tools, once so polished by the brightening hand of labor, now dark and rough with slothful rust; the arborous retreat from mid-day toil

where industry had so often reposed, now almost denied an entrance to the weary, for the honey-suckle, the vine, and the rose seemed to have conspired together to close its flowery porch. All proclaimed, that this spot once had a master, but that he was now no more.

Sephora set herself to rectify these evils, but they almost mocked her toil. She had no one to assist her in any of her domestic concerns but one old servant, who had been born in their family, and had passed his life in its service, the best part of which was now gone by; if that part may be called the best which is most distinguished by bodily vigor and unabated activity. But if the looking back on a long, useful, though humble course; and forward to a well-grounded hope of a happy immortality ought to be more esteemed, then, the best part of Zepho's life still remained. This faithful servant had known Patrobus from his birth, and Sephora listened with delight to all the stories he was fond of telling of her father's boyish days. It was true he had not much novelty in his anecdotes, but he made up in repetition what he wanted in variety. Some few things seemed written on the old man's brain as with an iron pen, and they, like ancient chieftains, still dressed in the fashion of their youth, boldly kept their ground, and suffered no intruder to molest them.

Sephora listened with unwearied interest to the many times told tale of how Patrobus first lisped out Zepho's name, as he was carrying home a wounded kid; and how he looked, and how the tears came in his meekened eye as he stroked the suffering creature. Then the old man would point out the exact spot where they stood, and Sephora almost fancied that she saw her father in the swathes of infancy. Even the history of his boyish days, that age of mischief, noise, and sportive vacancy, partook

much of the gentle and thoughtful character of his after life ; though instances were not wanting of more heroic achievements.

One of the most favorite narrations began by relating how fearlessly Patrobus, when only twelve years old, pursued a wolf that had attacked their flock. But as this history became much more extended, and ended by proclaiming how Zepho himself had finally subdued the depredator, it may be doubted whether his young master's fame or his own was nearest to his heart when he gave this detail. But be this as it may, Sephora listened to it always with attention and complacency.

Since the death of Patrobus, or at least since that period when his daughter resumed her habits of industry, this old man had chiefly been employed in tending the flock, that Sephora might not be so detached from her mother. But after they were penned in the fold, he used to come and do the rougher work of the garden.

No one was more ready for exertion and labor than Zepho, but the will in him was far beyond the power : yet he seemed to forget that his strength was decayed, and talked with all the vigor of youth, as he stood and looked round on his work ; but when he had turned over a few spadesful of earth, he went on more feebly, and when he rested for breath, his thoughts wandered back to the past, he almost forgot what he was about ; and such a confusion came over his mind, that he scarcely knew which of the three generations in whose service he had been successively employed, he was now working for ; while he quite forgot that he was then standing still and exerting himself for none of them.

Zepho never seemed astonished or distressed at the little progress he made in his work ; and yet, when he

began his next evening's labor, he always talked as largely as before of what he should do.

With only such an assistant, much of the beauty and much of the use of the garden depended on Sephora; for her mother now never assisted her;—but what was her joy this morning, as she raised her head from tying up a trailing azalea, to see Pythonissa standing by her, and hear her ask what work she could do.

Sephora's thoughts glanced round the garden with a spirit's swiftness, to see what there was to do, that was most likely to amuse, and least liable to fatigue her. At last she fixed on the bed of choicest flowers, which she asked her to clear from weeds; while she herself prepared some ground for seeds, and often, as she was thus engaged, she stole a look from her work to cast on her mother; and when she saw gloominess overspreading her countenance, she blamed herself for the employment she had given her, for she feared those flowers which had been the pride of the garden might too forcibly recall the past.

The plants that grew there were not such as were commonly found in that part of Palestine. They had been collected by Patrobus in his various annual visits to Jerusalem at the season of the Passover.

At these times he generally varied his route, and by that means was well acquainted with most parts of his country, nor did he find his heart the less disposed to celebrate his Creator's mercy, from surveying more of the beauty, the bounty, and the magnificence of his works.

Sephora knew the history of all these plants and the places where they grew. On her father's return after these yearly separations, as soon as the first joy of meeting was over, the next delight was to search the basket

for the new plants, and learn from whence they came, and all that he had seen while away.

Here were assembled the native of the arid rock and luxurious plain, the springing valley and the Alpine hight, the sombrous wood and free born wild, the margin of the fertile streams and sandy shore, that counts the dashing of the ceaseless waves. All these had met together on this level bed, though each in its peculiar soil.

Here Sephora, as in a book, would read her father's travels, and had often made him smile, by reminding him of circumstances connected with the gathering of these plants, or the places where they grew, which he had himself forgotten, but which her fond affection and youthful memory had treasured up.

This bed of flowers had been her earliest care, when first she resumed her habits of diligence; and though every part of the garden teemed with endearing recollections, this was the spot of ground she loved the best; and knowing how many tender thoughts were connected with it in her own mind, and seeing her mother look sad, she naturally concluded it might have the same kind of influence over hers, and from the peculiar depressions she labored under, that it might make her feel more of the anguish than the luxury of grief.

She, therefore, asked her to change employments with her, hoping by this means to break the chain of her gloomy meditations.

Pythonissa seemed mechanically to accept her daughter's offer. She took the rake from her, and moved it backwards and forwards, but evidently without any consideration of what she was doing; and Sephora on taking her work, found that she had latterly indiscriminately rooted up both flowers and weeds.

She looked among the rubbish for her favorites, and

her tears fell fast upon them as she placed them again in the ground. But whether it was the disordered state of her mother's mind, or seeing her father's beloved work destroyed, or the thought of the mouldering hand that first had planted them, that pressed upon her heart and made her weep, we cannot say. Tears are often a compound, as well as a simple, and the most subtle alchymist cannot always trace them to their source.

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## CHAPTER V.

PYTHONISSA, notwithstanding her fit of gloomy absence, certainly seemed much better this day than she had lately done. She sought, instead of shunning her daughter's company, and at night, asked what was her work for the morrow, as she intended to help her again.

Sephora, delighted to hear her say this, answered, that she had intended to gather olives, but there were several other things nearer home that wanted doing, and she should like that employment best that her mother felt most inclined for. Pythonissa had no choice, so it was decided that they should go for the olives.

The finest grew about two miles from their cottage, on the borders of a small lake, and this was the place they always went to, to gather them. The direct road to it lay by the tomb of Patrobus, but Sephora was afraid it would be too much for her mother's spirits to go by a

place that would naturally awaken such sorrowful recollections. Yet she did not shun to pass this spot herself, for she felt it a luxury rather than a grief to walk slowly by it, or to linger for a moment near the mournful cave.

Not that she sought for the living among the dead. She knew that her father was not there. When she thought of him, (and she was seldom long without thinking of him) her fancy followed him to heaven, and not to the tomb. Yet did this narrow dwelling recall many retrospective visions that were pleasing to her mind, faded, it might be that they sometimes were by distance, or still oftener dimmed by tears, but still they were pleasant visions.

The lake on the banks of which the olives grew, communicated with, and indeed terminated at one end the valley of contending streams. Sephora proposed that they should go through the valley to it; that they should descend the path through the wood behind the cottage, and pursue the course of the brook till they came to the lake. And to prevent her mother from being tired by going this circuitous route, advised her to ride to the olive ground on the ass, (who was always a principal personage in these expeditions, for he carried the fruit) and then she would only have to walk back again.

This was agreed to, and on the morrow they breakfasted together comfortably, if not cheerfully, and set forward for their work. Pythonissa and Emmor first, and Sephora following with the basket of provisions slung on the crook over her shoulder, which she took to shake and bend down the olive boughs, and in her left hand a bundle of fishing poles with net-pouches attached to the ends of them, to lay in the lake and entrap its heedless habitants.

They took the path that led immediately to the place

where the echo was that had delighted Sephora so much by its unexpected reply. She reminded her mother of it as they were going along, and said she should like that she should hear it. And just as she got there, the idea struck her that she might take that opportunity of saying something that would be likely to excite devotion in her mother's mind.

The Hebrew language, from the various modifications of its melodious sounds was easily susceptible of a kind of unpremeditated verse, for which Sephora had a natural talent, and with a mind well stored with sacred lore, and a most ardent desire to see her mother restored to permanent comfort, she immediately began.

"O God, thou art my God, praise waiteth for thee. How manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all. Thou sendest forth thy spirit and they are created, thou lookest on the earth and it trembleth, thou touchest the hills and they smoke.

"The wicked, also, tremble at thy power; the evil doers are afraid of thy justice; the concealed transgression is not hidden from thee.

"Yet is thy mercy greater than thine indignation, and thy loving kindness far exceeds thy displeasure. Thou extendest the golden sceptre rather than the glittering spear, and calleth to us to have pity on ourselves.

"Thou dost not willingly afflict the children of men, nor wilt thou suffer thy truth to fail. Though for a little moment thou mayest hide thy face, yet with everlasting mercies wilt thou have compassion on all who seek thee.

"The floods of light shall break in upon the darkened soul, and the mountain stream shall be less pure than him whom the Lord hath cleansed.

"The everlasting hills are less steadfast than his love, and when the foundations of the world are as though

they had never been, the just shall still stand in his sight."

Pythonissa listened with attention, and when the echo answered to the third stanza, she burst into tears. It was long since she had been so affected, and Sephora saw her with gratitude in this more softened state. Yet she would not appear to observe it, neither would she weaken those impressions, which she hoped would be working good in her mother's mind, by speaking of inferior things, and she followed her, walking silently, though not companionless through the winding valley.

She heard the voice of the creation uttering the praise of the Creator. The rocks fringed with the many colored leaves of autumn; the bold cliffs presenting all the varied lines of nature; the hills crowned with cedars, and the vallies decked with odorous shrubs; the clear silent stream that scarcely seemed to flow; the dewy flowers that grew along its banks, on which the industrious bee flew from bell to bell, and painted butterflies expanded and closed their glittering wings; the goats and antelopes, that seemed to breathe the very air of liberty, some peeping into the vale below, others skipping from crag to crag, or browsing on the dizzy height. All these objects seen through the medium of a grateful heart, made her find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and God in everything."

Nor was the lake itself an object incapable of yielding delight and instruction. It lay in the bosom of a stately amphitheatre of hills that rose almost perpendicularly from its margin, sheltering it from the ruffling breeze, and keeping it in perfect peace like him whose mind is stayed upon his God; while the liquid mirror adorned and honored its protector by reflecting back the everlasting heights that tranquilized it.

Often, though, was this beautiful image looked for in vain. The falling tempest deformed the surface of the reflector, or the wintry torrent stirred up the turbid foundation till not a vestige of its calm beauty remained.

Sephora had often contemplated this lake, and thought that it presented but too just and too mournful a picture of her own inconstant soul, that sometimes seemed peaceful and benign as its Creator and Preserver, and sometimes was tossed with tumultuous passions, as if it had never known his image or his love.

On the top of that hill, round whose base the olives grew, and almost inaccessible from its steepness, was a cavern called the lunatic's den. It had formerly been inhabited for many years by one who professed the Essene philosophy.

The Essenes were one of the most famous sects of the Jews. They had all things in common, they all dressed alike, and were clothed entirely in white. The utmost cleanliness prevails amongst them, and they practised numerous austerities. When they spoke it was always in turn; they never swore; and lived by rule and not according to inclination. They held adversity in contempt; they believed in the immortality of the soul; and thought that after death the good lived beyond the ocean seas, in a place of pleasure, where they are never molested with rain, nor cold, nor heat, but have always a sweet and pleasant region; but that the souls of the wicked go to a very tempestuous place, always full of the lamentation of those that are to be punished.

The man who had lived in the den, had entered this society and brought a large possession to its common stock; but no one could trace where he came from, or what had been his former life. He was not at first deranged in his mind, but overwhelmed either with grief or

remorse, and he seemed to seek in the strictness and outward purity of this sect, relief for a wounded mind. But finding none, he quitted society, and hid himself in this den, living only on the spontaneous fruits of the earth, and never laying up any winter store.

Patrobus when a boy, had often attempted to speak to him, and had many times contrived to cross his path. But he only turned his eyes wildly or mournfully on him, shook his head, or brandished his arm, and fled, or stalked away, according as his humor happened to be.

Once, and only once, when he followed him with looks and words of sorrow, the maniac turned with a benignant smile, and raised his withered hand over the stripling's glossy hair as if to bless him, but suddenly withdrawing it, began to wound himself with briars and flints, as if he mourned some broken vow.

This poor unfortunate had often been seen on moonlight nights, (at which time his disorder raged the most) the pale beams falling on his snowy raiment, walking frantically down the valley, and looking like its troubled spirit. At these times he would gather deadly herbs and crush them for their juice. Then he would return with a slow step dragging a heavy fragment of the rock to the borders of the lake, look cautiously and fearfully round and plunge it in, while the lunatic answered the sudden dash of the waters with a groan of horror.

At other times he walked with folded arms that rested on his breast, as if an infant nestled there; then danced them in the air, then stood amazed as if he had let something drop, then suddenly scratching up the earth would dig a hole, and heaping it again, would shape it like a baby's grave, and strew it thick with lilies and mountain thyme. Then would he sit down beside it, and

rest his fevered brain upon his burning hand, and there his watchers left him.

These little graves were often found up and down the valley, covered with half faded flowers, and claiming the tribute of a starting tear or passing sigh for the afflicted being who raised them.

In other parts were seen mangled heaps of hemlock, and bundles of the deadly night-shade with its mournful drooping bells, crushed between two stones. And thus it was made doubtful whether it were crime or sorrow that most preyed upon his mind. But be it which it might, it called for compassion. Man, proud man, omits to pass sentence on the wretch whose soul is torn by remorse. At the sound of his groans, Justice drops her sword, the fillet falls from her brow, and her stern looks are changed at once to those of dove-eyed pity.

This poor creature's weight of grief was often in Patrobus' thoughts, though he was then of an age not apt to think of sorrow. He used to scatter food for him in the valley at times when the earth produced no fruit. He sought for him one winter when the weather having been more than usually severe, and he had not seen him in any of his usual haunts, he feared he might suffer from famine.

He climbed up to his den, but found him not; but his flinty couch seemed to bear the bleeding marks of self-inflicted torture. He looked up and down the valley, and inquired for him among the neighboring shepherds; but no one could tell any thing of him. Some supposed that he had destroyed himself, and others, that he had retreated to some more cheerless spot. This lake indeed looked more like the abode of spotless innocence, than torturing guilt; yet probably the poor maniac chose the place as most suitable to nourish penitence and remorse.

Alas! that any should not know who alone binds up the wounded mind, and heals by pouring in the balm of his most precious mercy.

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## CHAPTER VI.

SEPHORA had often listened with all the avidity of youth for the wonderful, to the history of this mysterious man, and this day, having from her mother's assistance, finished her work much sooner than usual, the fancy struck her of scrambling up to the den, and sometimes by catching hold of the tufts of heath or yellow broom, sometimes by setting her foot on the roots of the olives that had fantastically twisted themselves above the earth, she climbed up to it; but when she got there, found nothing in particular to reward her toil, but the pleasure of having overcome difficulties.

The cavern was much like a hundred others she had seen, and there was nothing to make it interesting but the recollection of the wretched being who had inhabited it. Two little panting kids, which seemed as if they had tired themselves with play, had now got possession of it, and were lying down in the extremity of its deep shade, but on Sephora's entering, rose up, and half in frolic, half in fright, bounded past her, and perched themselves upon a jutting crag to watch her movements. She could not help contrasting this playful scene with the misery

with which this rocky den must formerly have groaned, and each seemed heightened by being set in opposition to the other. She was soon ready to descend the hill again to her mother, but first stopped a few moments at the mouth of the cave to look at that extended prospect, which must have given the poor recluse such an ample view of the world he had quitted.

Towers and misty cities, woods and rivers, hill and dale, plains covered with browsing flocks, corn fields thick with sheaves, and echoing with the voice of labor, and cloud-capped mountains, were spread before her; while the tranquil lake lay stretched beneath her feet, surrounded by its fringed and verdant ramparts. Such a scene might well induce her to linger; she could have looked on it with delight for hours, but she thought that perhaps her mother would be impatient for her return, and would not indulge herself by remaining any longer.

She found yet more difficulty in descending the hill, than she had in climbing it, and wondered how the poor lunatic could so often have got up and down in safety. When she reached the bottom, the sun was declining, and tinging the western clouds with gold and purple. It was time for them to be going home, she took up her fishing poles from the water, and with them many of the finny beauties of the lake, which, as they floundered on the ouzy bank, showed all the varying colors of that hand that dyed the peacock's plumes. Then fastening the covered baskets on the ass, she put in the olives, and spread grass over them, on which she laid the fish, and thus all things were quickly arranged for their return. She proposed to her mother to go back the way they came; but Pythonissa would not agree to it, and preferred the nearer path. Sephora tried to dissuade her from it, but could not; so when they had gone about half a furlong

through the valley, they turned short to the left through a gap in the rock, called the pass of Hadessa, and ascended the wood by a gradual acclivity, till they came to their family burying ground. It was a clear space in the centre of the wood, bordered in part by low rocks which had been excavated for tombs, and in part by ancient trees that stretched their umbrageous branches over them, and looked as if they might have seen many successive generations deposited beneath their shades. Sephora scarcely knew that she breathed as she entered this spot. The fear of the effect it might have on her mother, added to what she always felt as she trod this sacred ground, quite harrowed up her mind with doleful thought. They walked quietly across the grassy court that scarcely heard their footfall. No sound was there, "or none that hindered thought." The whisperings of the evening breeze that swept over the top of the trees, and the murmurings of the ringdoves that had built their nests in the cypress that shaded her father's tomb, were all that was heard, and these sounded more like the *hush* than the voice of nature.

She looked towards the hallowed cave, and saw the ferns and briony had already sprung up and half concealed the stone that closed it. She well remembered her sensations when she saw that stone placed there, and the mournful procession turned again to seek their empty dwelling. She feared that her mother must feel these sad recollections even more than she herself did, and she did not dare to look towards her till they had again immersed into the wood; when she cast a look of apprehension on her, expecting to see her overcome with gloomy sadness; but it was no such thing, her countenance expressed nothing but its usual inanity, when not sunk in mournful thought or roused by peevishness and

anger, for the soft and gentle passions seldom animated it.

Sephora, though relieved from her fears, felt half dissatisfied to see no sign of fond recollection, no token of departed happiness as she passed that spot where so much of her own lay entombed. She was much surprised too at this indifference, and began to muse in her mind whether it could be grief for her father's loss that occasioned the dejection of her mother. She knew of no other cause for sorrow, yet it was strange that she should pass his grave for the first time, as far as she knew, since he had been laid in it, without any apparent remembrance of him. But she tried to drive away perplexing thought, and only to feel thankful that whatever the cause of her mother's gloom might be, she had been free from it this day. She did not doubt but change of scene, and having had some occupation to employ her mind, had very much contributed to her greater cheerfulness, and as she knew that their rural works, would in a few weeks be chiefly over; that the olives would be gathered in, the corn-fields cleared, and the time of the vintage past, she began considering what would be most likely to afford permanent employment and amusement during the winter season. She thought their old and long neglected occupation of wicker-work would most probably interest her. She immediately proposed it by turning to her, and saying, she should like to begin their basket-making again, and asked her mother if she would go with her on the morrow after the next, to cut some of the autumnal shoots of the osier.

The day following was the Sabbath, it was also the tenth of the month Tisri, the great day of atonement, the day on which the high priest, throwing aside his pontifical robes, sent away the scape-goat into the wilderness laden with all the sins of the children of Israel—the

day on which he afterwards resumed his priestly vestments, and was admitted within the veil into the holiest of holies.

Sephora felt that this was a day much to be observed to the Lord ; she kept it by fasting, in silence, solitude, and devotion. She communed with her own heart in her chamber, and was still. She sought out her spirit, and compared it with the holy law of God. Where is the heart that does not instinctively shrink from such a scrutiny ? Where is the heart that will stand before the shining of the candle of the Lord, and discover no pollution there ? No crossed pride, no cankering care, no painted vanity, no gilded pomp, no tainted vice, no slanderous breath, no black ingratitude to God or man, no withering envy, no unhallowed love, no niche in which some earthly idol is enshrined, that claims the secret homage of the soul, to which the willing thoughts resort, towards which they press, and throng, and prostrate themselves, and there remaining, cleave to the sordid or the sensual lust. Where is the heart that can say, I am wholly free from all these things ?

Wherever it might be, Sephora felt too surely it was not with her. She compared herself with the most careless and the most sinful of her fellow-creatures, and could not tell but they might be acting more up to their ideas of what was right than she was to hers, and if so, which was the most guilty ? She found no satisfaction on reflecting on her own worth, or in comparing herself with that of others ; her only comfort was to sit low at the Almighty's feet, and trust to his swift winged and overshadowing mercy, for bearing away all her sins into the land of forgetfulness, and throwing over her trembling soul the veil of his own righteousness and glory.

## CHAPTER VII.

PYTHONISSA had agreed to go on the morrow to the osier groves, but when the morning came it was rainy, and they employed themselves in their household concerns till noon, when the sun dispelling the clouds, and shining with animating lustre on the refreshed earth, they, as soon as their dinner was over, set out towards the place where the willows grew, turning to the right along the verge of the shaggy banks of the river. They had not gone far before they heard the sound of music borne along by the stream. Sephora guessed that it was the hymeneal minstrelsy of one of her young friends, whose marriage she had been invited to attend, but which she had refused to do, because she did not like to leave her mother. They soon saw the procession coming towards them, and another advancing in a contrary direction on the opposite bank of the river. Both of these bands were alike, excepting that the one carried lamps in their hands, and the other instruments of music. They each consisted of ten girls, habited in white, with flowing hair, and chaplets of flowers on their head, and their wrists and ancles encircled with chains of gold, and hung round with bells. The one advancing towards them was playing on various instruments of music, and moving in graceful dance, to which their tinkling ornaments sounded harmonious time. They preceded the betrothed bride, who, covered with a veil that almost met the ground, walked slowly between her father and mother. The two

first and two last of the virgin minstrels played on the timbrels, and the three other pair on the pipe, the sistrum, and the dulcimer. Sometimes they performed altogether, sometimes in succession; then the instruments paused, and their voices raised the hymeneal hymn, which was a sort of prayer for the happiness of the married. The parents' voice did not join in this, but doubtless their hearts were not mute, and there was a melody there which was heard in heaven.

When the procession came opposite to where the other was stationed, the music and dancing ceased, while the bride and her parents took leave, and fell into each other's arms with speechless tenderness and affection. Who could have supposed that this was the accomplished wish, the moment they had all been looking forward to as the consummation of their desires.

Perhaps we are often more strikingly convinced of the insufficiency of human felicity in the possession of our hopes, than we are in the fulfilment of our fears. The best gifts of life are rather an exchange than an unconditional acquisition of happiness, and we shall generally find that some darling comfort is to be resigned, some Ishmael and his mother to be thrust into the wilderness, when the child of promise is received.

Sephora waited to see her friend conveyed by her husband to a boat decked with flowers, which wafted her over the river, and then go forward with still more faltering steps towards his abode, preceded by the opposite band, while her own friends turned back, and walked half joyfully, half disconsolately, towards the dwelling which they now thought had lost its dearest ornament.

Sephora and Pythonissa went with them as far as their road lay in the same direction, and then went forward towards the place where the osiers grew. It was a sort

of chasm on the banks of the Kishon, where the waters, being unconfined by their usual bounds, at flood-time flowed up the country, and made that marshy kind of ground in which the willow likes to grow. Several turf-built huts, shaded by oak and palm trees, stood on a gently rising ground by the side of the osier beds.

Sephora had scarcely begun her work, when a little boy came running to her out of one of them, and asked her to come and see his grandfather, who was very ill, and they feared going to die. She readily obeyed this summons, and following her conductor, entered a miserable cottage, where sickness, poverty, and hopeless grief seemed to have taken up their abode. How glorious to be sought for as the instrument of turning out such inmates; how delightful, to bring comfort to the disconsolate; nay, even the attempt is happiness, though not crowned with success. The wounds of pity do not rankle like those of pride, but yield a soothing balm that assuages all its own grief, even when it fails to alleviate that of others. The cabin into which Sephora now entered consisted of one large room, crowded with inhabitants, and littered over with dusty, broken furniture; the walls and floor were of clay, and there was nothing more like a ceiling than the naked rafters.

The rain which had fallen in the morning, had penetrated the roof in several places, and made the ground below quite plashy; yet, beneath this leaky thatch, the kind affections and the social virtues thrived, more than they often do in the stately palace. In the centre of this humble dwelling stood the stem of an oak, which seemed to form the chief support of the building, and round this were hung several fishing nets in different stages of progress, with the needles dangling to them. Skeins and balls of packthread were suspended still higher; and a

pruning hook leaned against this rustic pillar, and seemed to have been employed in removing the work from one place to another, and taking down the twine to replenish the exhausted needles.

In one corner of the room stood a table, with the cold remains of their slender, but almost untasted meal. Two little children, who could scarcely reach to help themselves, one with a large knife in its hand, and the other with a crust of black bread, were dragging about the provisions, while a thin hungry looking dog, with his head laid sideways on the table, was licking the unsavory platter. No one was attending to this scrambling group. The elder members of the family were all assembled round a tattered bed, on which lay a venerable looking old man. His sight was gone; and every feature was strongly marked with the deep ridge and furrow of age; yet there was something in his appearance that excited admiration rather than disgust. The top of his head was bald; but his hoary hairs, (that crown of glory if found in the way of righteousness) hung in waving ringlets round his face, and shaded his pallid countenance. On one side stood his daughter holding an infant in one arm, while with the other hand she strove to adjust his pillow, so that his weary head might find rest on it. His son sat below her on the corner of the bed, with his face bowed down, vainly striving to conceal his tears, for his sobs were audible. Two boys and three girls of different ages, stood mournfully round their beloved grandfather, looking with anguish on his dying form.

Sephora, whose sympathy was always ready for the unfortunate, was much affected at this scene. The poor old man could scarcely speak, and seemed ready to faint; he had not eaten for several days, and nature was nearly exhausted.

Sephora had nothing with her, but she thought some of the cordials she had at home might bring relief to him; or if not to him, to his distressed family, who had nothing to offer that could comfort them even with the hope of doing him good. She hesitated for a moment about leaving her mother, but one of the girls promised to stay with her, and help her to cut the osiers while she went for the medicine.

The house was more than a mile off; but Sephora was always active, and her feet never moved with greater swiftness than when on some errand of mercy. She was soon there, and ran immediately into her mother's room, where she kept her store of simples; but here she was so surprised, that she almost forgot what it was that she came for; for on opening the door, the first thing she saw was a tall black looking man, standing in the middle of the room. His dress was of a different kind from any she had ever seen before, and his physiognomy was to the full as singular as his garb; dark, overarching eye brows; a long bushy beard, and a countenance that expressed all the cunning and malignant passions.

A being altogether so singular and wild in his appearance and demeanor, would have startled her in any situation, much more in this. He, on his part, seemed in almost equal confusion at seeing her; though he could not be aware of the terror his presence had inspired, for her face was quite concealed by her wimple. He told her he was a traveller, who had called to see her father and mother, whom he had formerly known, and finding no one in the first room he went into, he had walked into the others to see if any one was at home. Sephora told him where he might find her mother if he would return with her. This he declined doing, and also to tell his

name, saying, he should most likely call again on his return from the journey he was at present going on.

They went out of the cottage together, but took different roads; the traveller struck into the wood, and Sephora went along the banks of the river. She hastened on to make up for the time she had lost in talking to the stranger, who at least more than divided her thoughts with the poor dying old man.

She was soon out of sight of the cottage, but when she had gone some distance where a bend in the Kishon gave another view of it, she turned her head, scarcely knowing what she looked round for, when she thought she saw part of the stranger's black mantle just floating into the cottage again. She did not like the appearance of this mysterious being, and felt rather uncomfortable at the idea of his going to their cottage again, when he must know that no one was at home in it. However, she pursued her way with her bottle of medicine till she reached the turf cabin, when she had the satisfaction to see it revive the poor old man, and raise the drooping spirits of a weeping family. He was soon so much recovered as to be able to sit up in his bed and talk to her. He asked who she was; and when he heard it was the daughter of Patrobus who had succored him, it seemed like another cordial to his heart. He said he had known him well, that he had served under him at the siege of Jerusalem, at which time he lost his sight. A stone from one of the Roman war engines struck out one of his eyes, and a fever followed, during which he lost the use of the other; that throughout this illness, Patrobus was so kind and attentive to him, that he was more like his servant than his master, and he got his friend Vashni to come and see him, and try what he could do for the recovery of his eyesight; but that their joint care was unavailing; it did

not please God to restore him the blessing of vision. His life only was spared; and as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to bear a removal, he was sent into the country through the gate opening into the narrow valley of Acre, of which the enemy had not then been able to get possession; that Patrobus had stayed out the remainder of the siege; but, when war was over, and he returned to his patrimonial possessions, they had occasionally seen each other, and talked over old times. "I remember in particular," said the old man, "his coming here one Sabbath with the book of Isaiah in his hand, and beginning to unroll it, he said he was come to read it to me, and make me a partaker of the best gift he inherited from his forefathers. I thanked him, but told him I did not wish to hear it; that I knew the commandments, and many good texts from the phylacteries of the Pharisees; that I had never done harm to any man; and this was learning and religion enough for me. I have often since wondered at myself, that I should be so ill mannered as to refuse to hear him. To be sure he had cause enough to be offended, considering how much I had formerly been obliged to him, and that he was so much above me in life, and had taken this trouble on my account. But, instead of showing any anger, he took my hand, and said with a voice of affection that I seem still to hear, 'Nicanor, you think that you have religion enough, but you may not always think so; you may perhaps live to feel the want of a peace of heart which this book could teach you how to obtain. Should that time ever come, send for me; we have been fellow soldiers in the turmoils of this life—our lot is now cast together in these more peaceful scenes—and I hope we shall be compatriots in that glorious world that lies beyond the grave. Nicanor, if ever I should get there, (as through the mer-

its of my promised Redeemer I do not doubt but I shall) I think I should be sorry to miss you.'

"There was something so tender and compassionate in his voice and manner, that, as he gently shut the door, I felt the tears start to my sightless eyes. It seemed then, and for long, long afterwards, as if it was the mere affection of his words that made them stay by me; but latterly, the import of them has been much on my mind, for I have felt the want of that peace he spoke of; but the time for sending for him is past. Oh! how often have I steeped my pillow with bitter tears, as this sad thought has weighed down my heart. I thought then that I not only knew, but had kept the commandments; and I trusted to this for bringing me peace at the last.

"But, during this illness, when age and infirmities have both given me warning that I shall shortly be seen here no more, I see my own character and conduct in a light in which I never saw them before. I now see plainly that I have not loved God with all my heart, nor my neighbor as myself. The more I think of these commandments, the more I perceive how often I have transgressed them; and indeed I am most puzzled to find when I have kept them. My dear family here all try to comfort me, and tell me what a good husband, and father, and grandfather I have been; but these kind things that they say, seem only to glance over my mind and leave no consolation behind them. Oh! if my dear friend and master had but tarried a little longer upon earth, he might have pointed out to me the paths of peace, and I should have followed his track to the realms of endless bliss. But I refused to be shown, I refused to be shown. Oh! could I tell you the load, the intolerable load, with which this thought presses down my soul.

I think it would be a warning to you all to seek the Lord while he may be found ; to call upon him while he is near."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

SEPHORA was much touched with her anguish, and felt the most earnest desire to bring comfort to his troubled mind.

"I wish," said she, "that I could explain the way of salvation to you as well as my dear father would have done ; but I feel that I know it better than I can tell it. I think I never wished for the tongue of the learned so much as I do at this moment. And yet I am convinced it is not the wisdom of this world that gives us understanding in the things of God. He reveals them to us by his Spirit, and he often blesses the meanest instrument, which makes me hope that he will bless even me, and that he will make you hear the glad tidings of salvation from my lips. He always teaches the knowledge of his way to all who desire to learn it. It is himself who implants that desire in our minds ; it is himself who alarms our conscience with the conviction of sin. But, as in the famous pool of Bethesda, the angel of the Lord troubles the waters before the sick are healed, so he only alarms our souls in order to give them true peace ; he only shows us the vanity of our own righteousness, to

make us feel the need of something better, and teach us to look to the great, promised atonement, as our forefathers did to the brazen serpent; for that alone can heal the deadly wounds of sin, and bring saving health to our souls. I know I explain these things very awkwardly to you, but when you do not understand me, lift up your heart to God, and ask him, that if what I say is truth, and according to his revealed will, that he would make you comprehend it, and feel the comfort of it. And you must remember that this is not a subject of curious speculation, but one which concerns our everlasting happiness."

"Ah!" said Nicanor, "it is not to a man on his death-bed that you need observe that."

Sephora repeated to him some of the promises of God, those cordial drops that are every where so profusely scattered through the book of life, and simply recited these words without offering any comment on them.

"Cast thy burthen upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He remembereth us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever. Who is he that feareth? Let him take hold of my strength (saith the Lord) that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God. He will not cast off for ever; though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

Nicanor was much affected, and could scarcely speak to thank her when she went away; but he begged her in a tone of gratitude to come again to him on the morrow, which she promised to do, and then took leave of him to go to her mother whom she had left so long. She found her and her companion very busy at their work, and she had the satisfaction of seeing that Pythonissa did not

seem displeased with her for having quitted her to attend the old man. She was thinking so much of Nicanor, and of what awful importance it is to a soul hovering on the verge of eternity, to know which way its interminable destiny lies, that it was some time before she remembered to tell her mother of the strange man she had found in their cottage. She mentioned it rather in a laughing way, and described all the particulars of his uncouth figure and ferocious countenance. But her mirth was soon over, for looking towards her mother, she saw her so deadly pale that she was quite frightened, and reproached herself for having represented, and perhaps for having exaggerated the appearance of this terrific being. She begged of her not to be frightened about him, but if she did not know who it could be, to let one of the men from the cottages go home with them, and look about the house and see that no one was there. Pythonissa did not think this necessary; she said she could not tell who the stranger was, but she dared to say it was some forgotten acquaintance, whom she should have been glad to have seen. She denied that she was at all frightened about him, but she trembled all the time she spoke.

They went on with their work, and she recovered gradually from her symptoms of terror, but it was late before they had bound up their bundle of osiers and prepared to return home. Twilight, the short twilight of the east, was yielding to evening, and the noiseless host of heaven were stealthily appearing one by one, while the dewy earth was also displaying its gems, and the pale lustre of the glow-worm was thickly strewed over the marshy ground. Sephora felt her soul in unison with this peaceful illumination of nature, by which she nightly honors her Almighty Creator. She looked towards Nicanor's cottage, but the shade of the trees fell so dark upon it,

that she could not have discerned the spot where it stood, but for the feeble glimmering of a lamp that shone through the aperture which served for a window. Nor did this vaporous light seem to her unworthy company for the purer ray of heaven and earth, for it was associated in her mind with that conscious peace, that secret joy, which seems so inseparably connected even with the endeavor to comfort others.

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## CHAPTER IX.

It was almost dark when they reached their cottage. Zepho was never in the house at that time, as he went home every night to his family. Sephora as she entered it, and went into her mother's room to strike a light, could not help thinking of the figure she had found there in the morning, and the circumstance of her having seen something that looked like his black robe, going into the porch after she had left it, now created more suspicion and alarm in her mind than it had done before. She was however glad to observe that Pythonissa did not betray any particular anxiety or fear, and having kindled some dry boughs of cedar, the bright blaze soon dispelled all her own foolish imaginations, and left her mind at liberty to enjoy those grateful emotions of a thankful heart, with which her mother's continued and increasing amendment inspired her.

She felt so much more comfort and confidence respecting her, than she had formerly done, that she had now left off that watchful way of sleeping and starting up, fancying that she heard her call. But this night, when she was in the soundest repose, she was suddenly awakened by hearing, or imagining that she heard the hoarse voice of the stranger, saying, in a low, stern tone, "Remember your promise." She call out, "Who is there?" but no answer was returned. The room was quite still, and in so much darkness that nothing could be seen in it or out of it, but the clear constellation of Orion, which shone through the open lattice. The voice had seemed as if it was close to her ear. She lay listening for some further sound till the morning dawned, but hearing nothing, and seeing then that there was no one in the room, she concluded it was a dream, and not a reality, by which she had been disturbed.

The next day was one on which they usually prepared for the feast of tabernacles, which was soon to be celebrated on that part of the plain of Esdraelon, called the plain of Zaanaim. It was a day of great expectation and joy. Sephora and her mother were up with the sun, and soon set forward towards the ford, at the little village of Hircanus, which stood on the banks of the Kishon. But when they got there, the waters were so swollen that they could not pass, and many impatient and joyous groups, as well as themselves, were waiting on the banks of the river to be ferried over in a little boat, which could only take in two at once. But as the pleasure of the day was social gratitude and enjoyment, those who were passed over first waited for the others, and sat down in various parties along the margin of the stream, resting from their rural burdens. All were laden with something, either with the fruits of the earth, or with implements of

husbandry or instruments of music. Some were crowned with large flat baskets filled with the products of the season. Others carried wine, parched corn, and baked provisions, while all the men were girdled with saws, hatchets, and spades, armed for the sylvan war. Old men and women stooping joyously beneath their lighter burdens, and busy childhood with swelled scrips, and trailing branches, delighted to exert every sinew of their growing strength; even infancy was there crowned with wheaten chaplets, holding garlands of flowers, and adding its artless note to the general chorus of joy. As soon as all who had assembled on the banks of the river had been ferried over, they set forward together along a little rocky glen, that gradually widened and became more fertile, and soon presented a beautiful scene of vineyards rising in ranks one above the other, and clothing the hills to their very summits; while the merry groups who were clustered together in various parts, gathering in the vintage, held up their long baskets overflowing with grapes, and shouting to their companions in the vale, echoed to the sound of their pipes, the song of thanksgiving and joy. Nothing could exceed the festivity of this scene. But soon they came to a more champaign country, displaying more varied tokens of industry and fruitfulness. Flocks, herds, olive-yards, and cornfields were so intermingled, that it might indeed be said to laugh and sing.

The loaded wains saluted each other as they passed; and the barking of the shepherd's dog, the bleatings of the sheep, the lowing of the cattle, the herdsman's call, the reaper's cry, made the earth ring again with the noise of labor, gratitude, and plenty. This part opened immediately on the spacious plain where they were to erect their leafy tents. It was bounded on the north by a hanging wood that displayed all the many colored tints

of autumn. It extended to the west, farther than the eye could trace it, and to the east till it almost reached mount Tabor. Here all the party became as busy as the busiest of those they had passed. Their first care was to choose a convenient place for depositing their stores. Then pruning knives were heard sounding through the wood, and all was order and activity, each working for the other ; it was one common labor and one common joy. They began by cutting down branches of trees and laying them in heaps. The palm, the myrtle, the olive, the willow, were all piled on each other. This was chiefly the work of the men. They then made them into tents of various shapes, and in this employment both men and women united to exert their labor and their taste.

Some of the tabernacles were enclosed, others were made open at the sides by stakes driven into the ground at equal distances, and wound round with the ivy, the eglandine, the sweet-scented clematis, and various other plants, whose flexile branches made them willing to lend their ornament to adorn the barren stems. The tops of these pavilions were roofed with leafy branches so thick one on the other, that the light could not penetrate them, and many a silent proof of affection was given in these floral wreaths with which they entwined each others dwellings, and the fragrant shady boughs that were chosen to protect the most beloved, from the rays and dews of heaven.

Fresh parties continued to arrive throughout the day, and their approach was announced to those already assembled, by the sound of their pipes and timbrels, which were sometimes for a few minutes most distinctly heard, and then lost again in the winding of the glen through which they passed : and thus rising and falling at uncertain intervals, it sounded like the music of the breeze,

and struck chords in unison with many a happy heart. At noon they all collected together in a recess in the wood, whose overhanging shadow formed a grateful gloom. Here the young women had been busy in laying out parts of their various stores, while the men had been employed in the more laborious exercise of cutting down the trees. And here they now sat down in different groups, arranging themselves, as inclination led them, and talked or laughed away the sultry hours. Some had no thought beyond idle mirth, but others recollected wherefore they were met, and what the mercies were that they were preparing to celebrate. Sephora was of the last number, yet she found her mind in some measure dissipated by the surrounding scene.

Perhaps few persons could think more humbly of themselves, than Sephora, or, to speak more correctly, she seldom thought of herself at all. Her chief charm to please might be said to consist in a manner unoccupied by self, and a face, whose varied expression formed the exact index of an undisguised, intelligent mind. From the sequestered habits of her life, and the reflective turn of her mind, which had been fostered by her father's conversation and instructions, her temptations to vanity had as yet been so rare, that she was scarcely aware of the natural tendency to that vice that exists in every human breast. But the sort of intoxication excited by the hilarity of the scene in which she was now engaged, and the thoughts and feelings which it awakened in her mind, convinced her of its danger, and habituated as she had been in every time of trial, to take refuge with an Almighty Protector, she now lifted up her heart to him with fervency in mental prayer. She had often fled to him in the hour of tribulation, had been relieved in terror, comforted in sorrow, and cheered in dejection,

but this, perhaps, was the first time she had asked to be delivered from the snares of prosperity. The train of her serious reflections was interrupted by her companions rallying her on her thoughtfulness, and it was soon time for them to resume their pleasant labors. They set busily to work, and quickly formed many a bower in which our first parents would not have disdained to dwell, in their days of innocence and happiness.

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## CHAPTER X.

THE plains of Zaanaim already began to assume a new appearance, from being skirted with the rudiments of this rustic town, which looked like the rising metropolis of the sylvan deities. Sephora chose her pavilion in the wood itself, where the shrubs already formed a verdurous wall, and by fastening some of the branches together that almost met, and adding others to fill the spaces between, a substantial roof was quickly made, and almost as speedily adorned with such numerous wreaths and garlands, that it looked like a mound of flowers. She was thankful that she could see these tokens of kindness bestowed on her by her friends, and feel that they excited her gratitude more than her vanity. Her humility was evidently unfeigned, and she bore all her honors so meekly, that even her companions who were most dis-

posed to envy, found the baleful passion checked by her unassuming worth.

Most of the young people associated together and left the old in parties by themselves; but Sephora never separated from her mother till towards the close of the evening, when she could not refrain from leaving her for a short time, while she walked towards the other end of their leafy dwellings, to look at the spot where their tabernacles had formerly stood, and where she could recal a succession of happy days from her earliest recollections to the present time. She forbore to choose this spot again, out of consideration to her mother's feelings, and made it her request that their dwelling for this year should stand in another place. Yet she could not deny herself the mournful luxury of casting a look on this site of former happiness.

Some of the stakes which had supported the roof of the tabernacle were yet standing, and the remains of withered wreaths clinging round them, presented sad emblems of departed joy. Sephora looked thoughtfully on these decaying remains of a building that was originally designed to convey the idea that we have here no abiding place of rest, and she felt that the withered fibres of these faded flowers, which the rough bark of the stem round which they were entwined alone sustained in their place, and kept from falling and mingling again with the dust, formed a striking comment on the nothingness and emptiness of earthly joys.

Many visions of former happiness arose to her view, and passed rapidly, yet solemnly, through her mind, as she contemplated this ruin of a withering bower, this shadow of shade. But amongst all the scenes of social joy, (and she remembered many) she did not in her most

secret thoughts retrace one in which her father's image was not the most prominent in the group.

She had not been long lost in contemplation of the past, before she heard the band of musicians strike their instruments, and knew that it was the signal of departure. She went towards them, and all were soon ready to journey homeward. Their stores they left behind without any fear of depredators. Nothing could be considered more sacred than this public property, which none had been ever known to violate.

The company which had proceeded to their work in the morning with such clamorous joy, had now exhausted their spirits in labor. Weariness had silenced the voice of mirth; the busy groups who had been gathering in the vintage, and gleaning in the olive yards, were retired to rest; the flocks were penned in fold; the shouting of the harvest was over; the tumult of the rustic world had ceased, and the silent calm of evening sat on the hills, while the luxuriant valley, the narrowing vale and rocky glen, through which they successively passed, faintly echoed the slow and solemn airs of the tired minstrels.

The waters of the Kishon had so much subsided during the day, that they were now able to cross them without the assistance of the boat, by means of fragments of rock, some of which formed the natural bed of the river, and others had been placed there at such distances, that they could step from one to the other.

Most of the party agreed, that if no more rain fell in the night, they would on the morrow cross the river again with their flocks and herds, and leave them with their shepherds in the plain of Zaanaim, to be in readiness for their sojourn there during the feast of the tabernacles, the celebration of which was to commence in three days.

Sephora, as she returned, thought of poor old Nicanor, and her promise of visiting him again. She did not remember when she made this promise what her engagements would be on this day, or how late it would probably be before her return; but, having told him she would come to him, she could not bear the thought of breaking her word, and perhaps adding to the miseries of an afflicted fellow creature, by making him feel the sickness that proceeds from hope deferred.

Her mother had appeared so unusually cheerful all the day, and so much exhilarated by company, that she did not feel any scruple at asking her leave to keep her promise with the old man; and as some of their associates would escort Pythonissa to her house, and they were now within two furlongs of Nicanor's cottage, Sephora left her party, and turning through a narrow dingle along a path of moss and flowery mountain thyme, she soon found herself before Nicanor's door. An awful sensation seized her mind as she put her hand on the latch. She felt that a soul might have taken its flight to an everlasting habitation since she was last there; and the uncertainty whether on entering she should see a breathless corpse, insensible as the bier on which it lay; or a feeble being still heaving with anxious life; or a peaceful child of God, reclining upon his sovereign will, and daring to trust him both for time and for eternity. This awful uncertainty, and the thought of the unspeakable difference there is between those states of being, thrilled through her frame as she still kept her hand on the unlatched latch. But on entering the cottage, every feeling gave way to delight and praise. A lamp that was suspended from the rafters, threw its light on the old man's countenance, now no longer clouded by doubt and distress, but animated by hope, by triumph, and by grateful joy.

He raised himself on his bed as she approached. "I know your step," said he, "though I never heard it but once. It is the way I have been accustomed to distinguish people since I lost my sight; and can I fail to know the sound of those feet that brought me the glad tidings of salvation? Oh no! the hovering of an Angel's wing could scarcely stir up a more holy rapture in my heart. How shall I tell you what peace, what unutterable peace I have experienced since I saw you. I have felt as if reposed upon the bosom of my God. I am sure of the efficacy of the promised sacrifice, and my own need of it in a way that I never did before. I see a fund of iniquity which I never discovered till now, that has been continually making me rebel against God, and exalt myself above the need of mercy. But, though the sight is hideous of a naked human heart, yet I can behold it without dismay, because those words of the prophet are continually on my mind; and I hear them as if addressed personally to myself—"thine iniquity is pardoned—thine iniquity is pardoned." Oh, do those words sound to you as they do to me? for I seem to hear them with my very soul; and there is a sufficiency in them, which the actual experience of a troubled, and a comforted mind, can alone conceive an idea of."

"Nicanor," said Sephora, "I was your instructor yesterday, but you are mine to-day. I know I have but a partial conception of the force of the deep truths of God; and I pray to him daily that he would reveal them to me more and more; and I have a firm hope that he will do so. My confidence in his goodness and mercy is increased this evening by seeing what great things he has done for you. It is impossible to witness the strength of faith in the dying, without feeling a more earnest desire after those things that belong to our peace, and forming some-

thing of a juster estimate of the value of that heavenly gift which upholds the soul that was sinking in despair, and more than consoles us for the loss of an expiring world."

"The world, what is it," said Nicanor, "to the soul that is leaving its receding shores? Where are now those meteor joys and cloudy cares, which threatened or allured, and were lost in the mists of vanity? I look back on my past life with confusion; it has been spent in sin, in nothing, or in worse than nothing—in the pursuit of—I know not what. I wonder at the world's infatuating power, I wonder at the gracious mercy of my God; and I bless you as the messenger of his grace, and perhaps the intercessor through whose prayers I have obtained his mercy."

"I have remembered you many times," said Sephora, "in the course of the day; and my thoughts have ascended to call a blessing down. A large mixed company is not favorable to an intercourse with heaven; but I believe there is no situation that can prevent a soul that is bent on communion with God from enjoying it; and as we were returning this evening in the hour of closing day, when nature herself seemed meditative and all our spirits were exhausted by labor, and lulled by the soft solemnity of the surrounding scene, my soul fled to a still calmer region, and I felt how willingly I could leave all the things of this world to enter the place of heavenly rest. I thought of you too, Nicanor, and felt rather a confidence of hope that you would see that way of salvation which your soul seemed so anxiously seeking after. Then it came into my mind how clearly we shall in another world perceive, that what appear to be the fortuitous events of this, are all links in the chain of providence; and many of the darkest and most mysterious

dispensations, we shall then find, are the rivets that bind us to a happy eternity."

"God works in his own way," said Nicanor; "we cannot tell why his mercy visits us; it is his pleasure that it should be so, and all the courses of providence are instruments in his hand."

"Perhaps," said Sephora, "we are all more ready to acknowledge that the great events of this life are meant for great ends, than we are to allow that the most trivial circumstances of our conduct and of our being, may have a necessary connection with things of the highest importance; and that they too are overruled by the Almighty. Why, surely, things that we call great and little, are alike trivial in the eye of omnipotence. They are all mere instruments in his hand; and it is not what *they are*, but what they accomplish, that makes them unimportant or significant. David slew the giant with stones from the brook, when he only went as the messenger of a shepherd's present to a captain of the hundred where his brothers served; and I, when I came only to cut osiers by the water courses, was called to slay the Goliath of your self-righteousness, and make you acknowledge the God of Israel to be the Lord that saveth.

"These are not tears of sorrow that drop on your hand, Nicanor; they spring from wonder and gratitude at thinking that I should be made the instrument of accomplishing such things. Supposing now that it were possible I could give to every human being in the world an exemption from every evil in life, and the uninterrupted possession of a perfectly satisfying happiness for the remainder of their days; is there any one who would not say that it must be a blessed thing to be such a benefactor to the human race? And yet, this is a happiness which could be estimated. The arithmetician could

compute the population of the world, and the years of their life; but let him add these together, and double, and treble the period of their lives, and then sum up the aggregate of happiness, what would all this be to a soul in an eternity of joy? When all this is past, eternity is but as if just begun—it is still eternity. Oh! it is a mighty unfathomable word; we speak of it much, but we know of it but little. I believe we come nearest in our conceptions of the importance of it, when we think of it as what it is not.”

“Yes,” said Nicanor, “perhaps it may be so, while we are surrounded and occupied by the things of time and sense; but when we come to stand on the utmost verge of life, we feel something of what eternity is, as well as what it is not. I have now at this moment a much stronger idea of it impressed on my own mind, than those which your words convey. Oh! that these my dear children, who are surrounding my dying bed, may but know how to estimate it; that they may but have heard with their heart and their understanding the faithful warnings of an aged parent, who earnestly longs to meet them again in a better world.

“My beloved offspring, I have nursed you all in succession on my feeble knees, and I believe I have known the utmost fondness of a father’s heart; but when I have seen you wasting with pining sickness, or racked with convulsive pain, I have never felt any thing like that earnestness of desire for your relief from suffering, that I now do to see you turn from the ways of a sinful world, to the love of an Almighty God: and though I have often felt your little arms twine round my very heart, and found your lisping tongues fill me with sensations of delight which none but a parent knows, yet, these purest of human joys and affections, fade away before the

thought of that transport with which I should embrace your ransomed souls, in the presence of a redeeming and a sanctifying God."

The family were all moved by the affecting energy with which he spoke. The tattered bed shook with the sobbing children who were gathered round it, and the old man, exhausted by the effort of pious affection, sank on his pillow.

Sephora now rose to go; it was so late that she did not dare to leave her mother longer. She took Nicanor's hand to bid him farewell, and felt that when they next met, it would be to part no more. He thanked her for all she had done for him, and added, "I have never seen you, my benefactress, but when we meet in heaven, I think I shall distinguish your voice among the seraphs." He then begged he might place his hand on her head, and give her his blessing.

She immediately unloosed the turban that confined her long dark hair, threw off the wimple she had just cast over it, and knelt down to receive his last words, while he strengthened himself once more to rise from his dying pillow, and stretch forth his sinewy but emaciated arm, that shook almost to convulsions between the contending claims of life and death. His trembling hand rested at length upon her head: he raised his sightless eyes to heaven, while the tears that dropped from them found a well-known channel down his furrowed cheek, and hung like the gem of sincerity and pity in his hoary beard.

A silence of some minutes succeeded; it was not as if he labored for thought, but for words to give it utterance. His heart overflowed with blessings for her; but it was some time before his faltering tongue could slowly pronounce this benediction:

"May the blessing of him who now stands on the con-

finer of the invisible world, who sees clearly the vanity of all that is passing from him, and the glory of all that is before him—who waits but the beck of the Almighty to pass over the threshold of eternity—may his blessing descend upon thine head, and flow down to thy children's children."

The old man now became silent; his hand still rested on her head, but its tremblings had ceased. She thought it was the pause of death, and arose from her knees to look on his countenance; but the last enemy could boast no conquest there. A holy calm sat on his features, and his whole frame seemed motionless with heavenly joy.

"Can it derogate from the majesty of our God, to suppose that he sometimes meets the trembling spirit on this side heaven, overshadowing it with those encompassing beams of mercy in which it is to dwell through all eternity? May not Nicanor's soul be now entranced by some faint and distant vision of that glory, into which it is so soon to enter?"

These were Sephora's thoughts, as she looked at death's inverted power, thus strikingly displayed in the beatific being who was now before her; and she waited some time, hoping to hear him speak again, but he still continued in the same quiescent state, and she once more arose to go.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE night was dark, and the rising wind began to moan in the trees, and sweep in hollow gusts along the plain. The people gave Sephora a lamp that was but ill protected by a broken horn case, but she was able to shelter the flame from the wind by partly shading it with her mantle, till she got more than a quarter of the way towards her home; when a high blast suddenly blew aside the screen and extinguished the light, and for a few moments made her feel herself in such dreary darkness, that she dreaded taking another step lest it should precipitate her down the steep bank of the river. But, though every star was obscured by clouds, she was soon able to distinguish the high arch of the heavens over her head, and was sensible of a more delightful exaltation of soul and of a more entire reliance on a protecting providence, than she had felt before.

"Is it not thus," thought she, "when we walk in the light of worldly prosperity, which like the lamp, throws a glare around us that prevents us from seeing any thing beyond it, but let it once be extinguished by the blast of adversity, we stand for a moment desolate, and the sublime glories of eternity open to our view."

She now proceeded on her way with more cautious steps, but she soon got accustomed to the obscurity that surrounded her, and began to see indistinctly the objects nearest to the path, and she also perceived at a distance a light that seemed approaching her. She thought at

first it might be one of those luminous vapors, that are not unfrequently seen in Palestine, and which arise in marshy ground, and assume a great variety of appearances, and amuse or deceive the unwary traveller. She continued watching the light, and perceiving that it came steadily forward in what, as well as she could judge, was the path leading from their cottage, she concluded that it might be her mother coming to seek for her, and a glow of gratitude came over her, at the idea of this supposed kindness, while, at the same time, she felt sorry she had alarmed her by staying so late, and been the cause of her coming out at such a dark and cheerless hour. She now quickened her pace, and being more thoroughly acquainted with her road, the nearer she got to their cottage, she went boldly forward, almost running to meet her mother. She was surprised to find at how much greater a distance she was from her than she had supposed, for the darkness of the night had made the light conspicuous at a great distance. She now approached it more nearly, but when within a few yards she suddenly stopped short, at seeing the immense dark figure behind it.

She was instantly convinced that it could not be Pythonissa, nor could she conjecture who or what it might be, for, seen through a misty atmosphere, it had quite a gigantic appearance. She stepped aside under the broad shade of an ancient plane tree, whose sheltering branches she was well acquainted with, while this colossal figure passed by her.

It approached with slow and measured steps, muttering discordant sounds in a voice which Sephora thought she had heard before, and quickly distinguished to be that of the mysterious stranger, whose appearance had alarmed her so much once before, and whose voice had since ter-

rified her dreaming thoughts. He advanced with his eyes intently fixed on the lamp he held in his hands, which was protected from the weather by a very transparent substance, and that side next to himself looked as if stained with blood, and cast a dark red gleam of light over his ferocious countenance.

Sephora, who forgot the loudness of the elements, fancied that her hurried breathing would betray the place of her concealment, but he passed by so wholly intent on his lamp and his mutterings, that he heard nor saw else. The rushing of the waters, the howling of the wind, and the fearful breathing of Sephora, seemed alike unnoticed by him.

She rejoiced at having escaped his observation, but no sooner had he got to the extremity of the plane tree, than he turned again and made the circuit of it; but still he took no notice of her. Again he compassed it in a narrower circle, and again she escaped his observation, but felt unable to move from her station. Each time that he passed she hoped that she should see him no more, and that she should soon feel recovered strength enough to proceed to her home. But she was deceived in her expectations; the stranger again made the mystic circle, and this time he came so near the antique trunk against which she leaned, wan and breathless, that the full glare of his lamp fell on her pallied form. He started at the sight of her with the utmost expression of surprise and horror, the lamp fell from his hands, and he fled, adjuring her as his tormenting angel not to pursue him. Poor Sephora never felt more disposed to comply with any request, than she did with the extraordinary demand of this mysterious stranger, whom she now supposed to be some poor maniac, who was wandering about the country.

The lamp had not been extinguished in its fall, and as

soon as her tottering limbs would let her move from the spot where she stood, she went towards it and took it up. It was more curious and beautiful than any thing of the kind she had ever seen. The covering was of crystal in a globular form, one half smeared over with fresh-looking blood, or with some color that resembled it. The stand was either of gold, or of the finest brass, and appeared to be of exquisite workmanship, though most of the figures represented on it were the most incongruous that could well be imagined. But she did not spend much time in examining it, as she was desirous of getting home as quickly as she could. She took the lamp with her, and had not gone many yards before she saw a still more cheering gleam issuing from their cottage window, to which she gladly drew near, and in a short time had the comfort of finding herself on her own threshold.

Her mother had retired to rest, but had left the door unfastened ; she was not, however, gone to sleep, but said that she lay listening for her arrival. She spoke very kindly and comfortably to her daughter, and as she did not ask her any particulars of her walk home, or what made her so late, Sephora forbore to give her any, and thought it best not to furnish her with any matter of cogitation that might disturb her rest.

She quickly took some refreshment herself, and retiring to her own room, set her curious lamp down on the table, and began to examine it more accurately. The idea at this moment first presented itself to her mind, that this lamp was not hers, and that she had no right to bring it away, that it was in fact stealing the property of another. This thought disturbed her very much. She tried to argue it away by the consideration, that what she had done was mere thoughtlessness, for the idea of any

thing wrong had never entered her mind till this instant. She put out the lamp and went to rest, somewhat fortified by this consideration. But conscience, when unused to yield to any base power, is a stout disputant, and now returned to the attack, and told Sephora, that though it was no crime in her to carry away the lamp, because she did not then suspect it to be evil, yet the moment she perceived that it was so, it became her duty to carry it back to the place from whence she took it, where the stranger would be likely to look for it, and where it was plain she might have taken it without any danger, because, even if she should have encountered this unfortunate being again, which was not very likely, it was evident that she inspired greater terror in him, than he did in her.

It was in vain that these thoughts came into her mind now, for they came too late for redress, and served only to torment her. The light was extinguished, and in utter darkness she felt that it was quite impossible for her to get up and find the lamp, and carry it to the place from whence she took it. At length she came to the resolution of lying awake till the dawn of day, and then going to replace it under the plane tree.

Her mind was now at ease, and this circumstance, together with her weariness from the fatigues of the day, made her insensibly forget her determination and yield to sleep, and it was much later than her usual time of rising before she awoke. The first thought that came into her mind was the lamp. She started up to look towards the table where she had left it the night before, but it was gone. When, or how, she could not imagine, and she felt so confused with just awaking, and with the hurry of ideas that rushed immediately into her mind, that she doubted for a moment whether it were not all a

dream. But her thoughts soon becoming more settled, she clearly recollected all the circumstances of the preceding evening. She directly went into Pythonissa's room, intending to ask her if she had been in her chamber and taken away the lamp, but finding her mother asleep, she perceived that that could not have been the case, and recollecting how much her description of this stranger had alarmed her before, she forbore to say anything of her loss, as she knew the mention of the lamp must necessarily lead to all the circumstances connected with having had it in her possession. How to account for its disappearance she knew not. Some perplexing thoughts passed through her mind; but this was not an hour to be held long in the chains of mystery. The sun was shining bright on the dewy earth, and the indefatigable bees were thickly clustered round their hives, and buzzing and fluttering over a knot of autumnal flowers that grew before her window, inciting her by their cheerful industry to emulate their example. And soon a little troop of their neighbors came moving towards their cottage with a jocund step, to invite its inmates to go again to the plain of Zaanaïm and assist in driving their flocks. Sephora, on receiving this proposal, looked towards her mother, to see how she felt inclined; as for herself, she would rather have stayed at home. But Pythonissa, though she declined going herself, absolutely insisted on her daughter's accompanying her friends. Sephora begged almost with tears in her eyes, that her mother would either go with them or suffer her to remain with her; but she continued quite firm to her first determination, and spoke in a tone of voice that she had been accustomed from her childhood to obey.

She had scarcely ever submitted to her authority with greater reluctance than she now did to make one in this

joyous group to the plain. Insensibly, however, as she passed along, she caught something of the alacrity of the party. The cheerfulness of nature and of rural scenes and rural occupations, has nothing in it oppressive to a wearied spirit, like the tumult of crowds, and the unmeaning amusements of art; but on the contrary, they rather exhilarated her and restored the tone of her languid mind, while the shepherd's pipe, the plaintive bleatings of the flock, and the gentle tinkling of their many sounding bells, struck a concord with the surrounding objects of which she felt the perfect harmony.

When they arrived at the ford, they found the water quite low enough to pass, but the silly, timid sheep could scarcely be driven across it; they had no recollection of the fresh pastures that lay on the other side of the stream, nor remembered how often their kind and provident shepherd's had conducted them thither.

Sephora, who was of a contemplative turn of mind, but who knew little of books, excepting the book of nature and the book of God, was in the habit of reflecting and moralizing on incidental occurrences. She thought that in these stubborn sheep she could trace some resemblance to the flock of a more infallible shepherd, who are ready to be guided by him while he leads them through flowery pastures, but turn aside and go backward at the sight of difficulties or dangers, though they know they have again and again been brought through them by their kind protector, who has there refreshed them in fairer meads, where they have cropped the flowers of immortality, while the still waters of comfort flowed softly by. And yet, when the next trial comes, they shrink from suffering, they forget their God, and refuse the guidance of his unerring hand.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE valley and the glen presented this day even a more animated scene than it had on the one preceding, for in addition to the flocks and herds that were driven through them, a company of people, almost as large as the one the day before, were proceeding to the plain to erect their tabernacles.

Sephora and some of her friends, who found that their exertions could be well spared from the labors of this numerous host, proposed, as soon as their flocks were conducted to their destination, to borrow some of the herdsmen's mules, and make an excursion to explore mount Tabor. The hill was about seven or eight miles from them. Its singular and regular form rising in solitary grandeur in the midst of an extensive and fertile plain, made it a very peculiar object, equally curious as beautiful. As they approached it, it lost something of that regularity of form, which, at a distance, made it look more like the work of art than nature, if one could for a moment suppose that art ever wrought any thing so magnificent and stupendous. But on a nearer inspection, broken crags and large masses of rock, intermingled with luxuriant shrubs, and towering forest trees, plainly showed the hand of a nobler operator.

The travellers took their mules a part of the way up the hill, over a mossy herbage, that was perfectly enamelled with flowers. The ascent at this part was too steep to ride any further, and an inviting shade of date trees made them determine to spread fourth their stores and

dine. They were glad to rest and shelter themselves for a time from the burning rays of the sun, which had latterly been particularly fervid. They were unwilling to suppose that any evil was overtaking them, yet they could not help observing that the clouds seemed gathering for a storm. But they were reluctant to return without having accomplished the object for which they came, particularly as if the storm fell, they had no chance of reaching any better shelter than the date trees, before it overtook them. The party were now divided in opinion as to what they should do; some thought there would be time to visit the top of the hill and return before the tempest came on, and others were for remaining where they were till it was over. They accordingly divided; Sephora was one of the enterprizers. They soon got dispersed in different pairs and groups as they ascended the steep sides of Tabor. She had for her companion, an old friend of her father's, for whom she had a most sincere esteem, and almost veneration. Patrobus used to call him his oracle, and said if he ever felt doubtful or distressed on any subject, he never failed to find relief by opening his mind to Arbalio. This faithful and judicious friend, whose counsels Patrobus so highly respected, and who had seen the world in various forms for considerably more than half a century, was yet so extremely diffident, that it was almost painful to him to bear a part in conversation, excepting when with his intimate friends, and yet there were few who could forbear to listen when Arbalio spoke. His gentle, distrustful voice created a silence which the noisy declaimer demanded in vain, and it seemed as if all were more inclined to listen from the very circumstances of their attention neither being enforced nor even desired.

This estimable old man felt none of that shyness with Sephora, which was so often distressing to him. There was something in the natural vivacity of youth and the gentle intelligence of a feminine mind, that was particularly congenial to his taste; and besides these attractions, Sephora had the still superior one of being the daughter and the softened image of his departed friend. Arbalio was not a man who talked of friendship, he was one who felt it, and his regard was oftener to be read in his glistening eye, than heard from his faltering tongue. He was scrupulously exact in adapting his language to his feelings, but he sometimes found he had feelings which language could not exactly express, and then he was contented to suffer or enjoy them in silence; and he well knew what "that joy or sorrow is that a stranger intermeddleth not with." When he heard of the death of Patrobus, he felt as if one of those bands were burst which bound him to the earth, and another friend safely landed on that heavenly shore on which his own mind's eye had long been fixed.

Sephora felt all the freedom of the most unreserved confidence towards one who regarded her with almost a parent's affection. She told him all her anxieties about her mother, and spoke to him of the events of the preceding night. He did not offer any conjecture as to who the mysterious stranger might be, but made many inquiries about her mother, what her habits of life had been since her husband's death, and how her mind had seemed affected. He said he had often heard people lament that she did not possess those amiable dispositions which so eminently distinguished his departed friend; but for his own part it had often struck him that it was a happy thing she did not, for if one who was himself so full of

gentle, fond affections had met with an equal return in the wife of his youth, it might have made him set up his rest here, and not seek for any thing beyond an earthly happiness and a terrestrial paradise.

Sephora was silent, her friend had incautiously touched two strings which vibrated painfully to her feelings. He was sorry to perceive he had said any thing to distress her; and they walked on some way without speaking. The low muttering of distant thunder at length broke the silence, and turned the subject of conversation. They had now nearly climbed the laborious ascent of Mount Tabor, which they had been more than an hour in accomplishing. It terminated in a fine oval plain, about two furlongs in length and one in breadth, that was nearly surrounded by fine majestic trees, between whose aged, knotty trunks, was presented one of the most noble, extended, and varied prospects that can well be conceived. To the west, lay the verdant plains of Esdraelon and Galilee, interspersed with villages and towns, and the bold promontory of Carmel, stretching into the Mediterranean, which glittered with the sunbeams, and looked like an extended sheet of silver.

This prospect formed a striking contrast to that on the north-east, which was now overcast by the rolling tempest, and presented a scene of tremendous darkness. Some, however, of the highest of the snow-capped peaks of the distant chain of the Hermon mountains, were visible above the storm, the sun shone on them, and they looked like the pale watch-fires of death. The intermediate scene was quite obscured by clouds which hung with particular darkness over the sea of Tiberias. The lightning darted across this dense vapor with awful swiftness, now it was a cloud of blackness, and now a cloud of fire. The storm advanced rapidly towards

Mount Tabor, and it was almost impossible to contemplate the approach of such a visitant without some sensation of dread. Even the most thoughtless were constrained to feel that there is a Power that rules the heavens, that maketh the clouds his chariot, and rideth upon the wings of the wind. The elements were all hushed in deceitful silence as the prelude to some mighty convulsion. It was one of those fearful pauses, when nature herself seems alarmed, and the pulse of life to stand still. Soon this treacherous peace was broken by a rushing wind that swept over the aged crown of Tabor, tearing off the branches, and scattering them with wild fury over the flowery plain. The first rage of the hurricane was scarcely over, before it was followed by a tremendous shower of hail, that seemed sent to complete the work of vengeance, and destroy all that the wind had spared. Rain, lightning, thunder, all the artillery of heaven seemed directed against this devoted mount. But the fury was short, almost in proportion to its violence, and the tempest passed on towards the south, over the mountains of Gilboa, Samaria and Engedi, till it reached the Mediterranean, and obscured the glittering ocean.

It was a glorious sight to watch the progress of the storm, and see this winding chain of lofty hills alternately obscured, and then again enlightened by the sun's returning beam, and many of the dripping party thought it a sufficient recompense for having been themselves exposed to its rage; and feeling at once their nearness to danger, and their deliverance from it, made them look with an awakened eye on these manifest tokens of the Almighty. They now turned again towards the north and north-east, and saw every object with unusual clearness and lustre, from the storm's having swept away all the vapors. The ridge of the Tyrian mountains glowing with the

purple heath that covered them now in its highest bloom, and the lake of Tiberias on which many anchored boats had spread their sails to dry after the storm, and whose romantic banks scattered round with cities and villages, presented a beautiful and elaborate frame, the joint work of art and nature. This lake, though at its nearest point it was almost ten miles off, yet from the height on which they stood, appeared as if stretched beneath their feet, and they could almost look into the streets of some of its surrounding towns, while they could trace the waters of the Jordan for many a winding mile.

The ancient city of Bethulia, seated on a lofty hill, formed a striking object, among many others, almost too numerous for observation, and far exceeding the limits and powers of description.\* Sephora had brought with her a basket and an implement for getting up roots, that she might bring away some relic of Mount Tabor. But in going up the hill, she had been too much taken up by conversing with her friend, to attend to the pursuits of the herbalist, and since she had arrived at the summit, she had been so engrossed by fearing, and feeling, and watching the storm, and in seeing the numerous, grand, and interesting objects, which presented themselves from this elevated situation, that she had not found time to look for the humble floweret. Her friend, however, who shared her taste and admiration for these lowly children of nature, as well as for its more stupendous works, proposed to assist her in her researches as they descended the hill, and she had soon her basket full of novelties for the decoration of her garden. Arbalio explained to her their properties and uses, and descanted on their beauty.

I have often been struck with admiration, said she,

\* See Note at the end.

when accurately examining some mean looking, insignificant plant, and observing the various contrivances for the protection of the bud, the unfolding of the flower, and perfecting of the seed. All these I see and wonder at, but where are the tubes which convey juices of such various properties to different parts of the plant? Where is the volatile perfume that surrounds the flower, constant as its guardian angel? Not even the most curious eye can detect them. How limited is the knowledge and the observation of man, even in regard to the meanest object of creation. And yet, had he but a power of combining that knowledge, and of viewing it by one glance of the mind, with what glorious ideas would he be filled, of the great Lord of heaven and earth. If now, at the same time that we looked over that extensive prospect from the top of the mount, we could have felt all that the different parts of it have ever made us feel. But the human mind is too limited to entertain even its own imperfect ideas all at once, and we are so far from being able to do this, that a single flower or leaf fills the mental vision and confounds it.

Sephora looked with pleasure on her basket of treasures, and said, "I shall plant them in the same plot of ground where my dear father used to plant his."

Arbalio, who had often accompanied Patrobus in his excursions to and from Jerusalem, remembered how many pleasant hours they had spent together in admiration of nature, and of nature's God. And the mention of his bed of flowers threw him into a fit of musing on the past. Sephora's thoughts were filled with the same object as Arbalio's, though she saw her father in different scenes, and they walked far down the hill, in a silence that they both felt to be far more companionable, than the conversation of the unthinking world. They had taken rather

a different course from the one they pursued in ascending, and they soon found their path terminated by an abrupt precipice, which presented at its feet a scene of so much beauty, that they were glad they had so far missed their way as to enjoy it. It looked immediately down into a narrow valley of mingled rock and wood, at the entrance of which, stood the village of Deborah, supposed to take its name from Deborah the famous judge and deliverer of Israel.

Near this place was the fountain of the Kishon, which was generally but an inconsiderable stream, but was now increased to a rolling flood, by the mountain torrents that foamed over the large gray stones that had been washed down, or laid bare by similar currents, and which distinctly marked out the channels of the fallen tempest, even when not a drop of water trickled over them. This cascade now formed a very beautiful object, and more especially a little lower down, where it made a more abrupt fall, and entered a ravine of the rock, rising again with a sparkling light spray that scattered itself over the surrounding shrubs. They thought it a pity to have the enjoyment of this lovely scene all to themselves, and supposing they could not be very far from the place where they had left their more timid friends, they were setting out to seek them, that they might at least have the pleasure of this sight; but on looking forward towards the plain, they saw the group already far advanced towards their rustic habitations.

They now began to fear that they should not find their mules, but on descending to the spot where they left them, they met again the party from whom they had separated in their search after plants, and found the poor animals safely secured to the trees, and from their still dripping appearance they judged that those who staid had fared

as bad as themselves, without having had any thing to recompense their toil and their alarm. The most enterprising of the party were however by this time tolerably fatigued, and glad to get on their mules and follow the path of their more cautious companions.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE birds were singing sweetly as they went along, and seemed rejoicing that the storm was past. Sephora and Arbalio spoke of the variety of tuneful sounds which these little choristers display. "There is something," said Arbalio, "in the notes of the birds in spring, which I think have beyond any other music the power of recalling the past. Those peculiar and delightful sounds seem to unite the balmy air on which they are borne, and to open all the cells of memory by a kind of magic force. There is in spring a fragrance that wants a name ; it is to the smell what honey is to the taste—the essence of every sweet mingled and compounded ; and like the lotus of the ancients, it makes us forget all our cares ; or if we should happen to have no cares to forget—if our visions should be gilded by hope and expectation, then this bewitching gale comes over us with too much force, and we so completely yield ourselves up to imagination, that we almost forget we still tread on earth, subject to pain, vexation, and disappointment. Do you, my young

friend, ever feel any thing of that influence of the vernal season of which I speak ?”

Sephora acknowledged that she did, and she could trace the delusive joys of her own imagination, as he was describing the wanderings of his. “But,” added she, “besides all the influences of spring, there are certain natural objects belonging to every season, which call forth in me inexplicable sensations of delight. An uncultivated mountain on an early summer’s morning, purple with heath, and wet with dew, and the wild bees flying from flower to flower, or sleeping in the hanging bells, has always conveyed to my mind enthusiastic ideas of peace and liberty, which I can feel and recall, but cannot describe, or when the high autumnal blast sweeps the bending trees, and returns with a shower of many-colored leaves, which are now wheeled in rapid circles, now lightly poised in air, now fall to the earth, then again rise again to fall, I am led to solemn thought. I think of the time when I watched the unfolding of their fragrant buds ; of the time when I was sheltered under their leafy branches, and I feel as if I were parting from a friend. I feel the instability of nature, the littleness of man, and myself the least ; and yet, amidst these humiliating convictions, I find a consciousness of being allied to that power who sways the blast, and makes the forest bend.”

“Sephora,” said Arbalio, “you have mentioned some of those scenes in nature, which I have often found affect my mind in the same way that you describe them to have yours. There is something very gratifying in finding a friend whose intellectual pleasures are congenial with our own ; how much higher then does our joy arise, when we feel an entire unity of soul as well as of mind, and know that our friendship in this world will hereafter bear

the indestructible stamp of eternity. But, what are your winter delights?"

"They are of more rare occurrence than those I have mentioned," said Sephora; "and perhaps, from that circumstance afford me the more gratification; but my joy then is to walk over the trackless face of nature, amidst fantastic cliffs of snow, while the setting sun sheds rays of gloomy light, as it sinks beneath the heavy clouds that look more like the boundary of the earth, than as if still suspended in air. To taste this new, this pure, this solemn scene, conscious that a kind providence has exempted me from feeling any of the rigors of a hard season, fills my heart with gratitude and meditative devotion, while my mind teems with projects for the relief of those who find no difference in winter, but an increase of cold, of nakedness, and of hunger."—"Ah!" said Arbalio, "perhaps, those are less to be pitied than the wealthy inhabitants of crowded cities, who only distinguish it by an increase of dissipation, a wider departure from nature, and a greater forgetfulness of all those duties which are designed to link man to man."

The conversation of these friends was here interrupted by some of the rest of the party joining them. They were sorry for the intrusion, but were not put out of humor by it; on the contrary, they exerted themselves to please their new companions, and to prevent them from feeling that they were unwelcome. They all of them soon approached the busy host, whom they had left in the morning, and admired the variety of beautiful tabernacles that had been raised while they were away. Their work had suffered no interruption from the storm, for they had nothing of it in this part of the plain but a slight shower of rain, which had refreshed rather than annoyed them. But they had seen it hanging with tre-

mendous blackness over Mount Tabor, which seemed to flash out fire. The children said, "Is not this like Mount Sinai, when God descended on it?"—and what they said, others thought.

Sephora, when she heard how terrible the storm had been in appearance as well as in reality, was glad her mother had not come with her, as she was sure she had escaped much apprehension.

They were now all soon in motion for their return, excepting the shepherds, who staid to keep watch over their flocks. Arbalio and Sephora here parted, as his habitation lay in a different direction from hers, on the other side of the hanging wood. He told her that when they met at the approaching festival, he must take her to see it; that he thought she would admire its secluded situation. It was some miles from any other dwelling, almost as much embowered in trees as her tabernacle, and a rill which issued from the rocks above, came dashing down into a small lake that stood before it, and made a ceaseless murmur of which he never wearied.

Sephora asked him if he was tired of life, as he chose such seclusion?—He said—"no; that he had often heard people say, that there was nothing in this world worth living for; but he did not himself feel that weariness of existence which such a declaration implied; on the contrary, that he believed there were many things that were worth living for in this world, and that he knew there were things that were worth dying for in another.

"No," continued Arbalio, "I am not one of those who complain of the dull sameness of my being. I have formerly known life in too much change, but my hopes, which used to rove from vanity to vanity, have long been concentrated on the only unfailing good; and, I think that I have learnt more in my solitude of all the wind-

ings of the human heart, by deeply studying my own, than I ever did by the conversation of the wisest men, or the works of the most learned. I can say with Solomon, 'Whoso increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow;' and I should have wished not to have known myself, if I had not at the same time learnt to know my God, and felt his love and mercy controlling my willful heart. Sephora, if we meet again, I think I will give you some of the particulars of my pilgrimage though this world."

"Well," said Sephora, "we are very likely to meet, for you know the feast is the day after to-morrow."

"Ah! my young friend, when you have lived as long as I have, you will learn to speak doubtfully, and to know that nothing is certain in this life, but uncertainty. When you hear my eventful history, and some parts of it that even your father was unacquainted with, you will not wonder that I should feel a conviction of this truth. You will find some calls for your compassion in what I propose to relate to you. An ancient pagan writer tells us, that when the Deity first formed man out of the ground, reflecting at the same time on the calamities the unhappy creature was to endure, wept over his work, and tempered it with tears, that man, whose heart should be so often overcharged with sorrow, might not want a way to give it vent. Perhaps, I may call forth some of these sacred drops from you: but, farewell; the music sounds to depart. I wish we were going the same path; there are not many for whose society I would willingly exchange my own; but you are one of the few."

Sephora and her friend here parted, and took their several ways; each carrying with them so much thought of the other, that it was scarcely like separation, for the intercourse of mind still seemed to vibrate.

## CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN the party arrived at the river, they found it so much flooded by the thunder storm, and the many tributary streams that had been pouring into it, and the current so exceedingly strong, that it was doubtful whether it could be passed even in a boat. Two, however, who were good swimmers, ventured over; and as they crossed it in safety the rest followed, and were in time all landed on the opposite bank without any accident, though not without some sense of danger from the violent rush of waters, that battled hard with their little boat, and was near overcoming it more than once. No one liked to move on towards their home till they had seen the whole of the company safe over, and it made them late before they went forward.

Sephora, who was amongst the first who were ferried over, and was tired with the exercise she had had in the course of the day, went into the boatman's cottage to rest herself. She found his wife sitting with a child laid across her lap, who was crying and moaning with pain, and a little girl, with the tears running plentifully down her cheeks, was standing over it, saying, "My poor Heber! my poor Heber!" The mother looked miserable, but uttered no expression of sorrow, neither did she try to soothe her child.

"What is the matter with him?" said Sephora. The mother looked up, but made no answer. She then repeated

the question, and turned towards the girl. The affectionate little creature could scarcely answer for her tears. At last she sobbed out, "He has been through the fire."

"What! did he fall in?"—"Oh no! they put him in; the priest put him in. Poor little Heber smiled when they bound him round with flowers; but I screamed, for I knew what they were going to do. Mother did not cry; she fell down on the ground asleep when she saw them coming, and it was a long time before any one could awaken her. She did not hear the drums and trumpets, and clanging cymbals, though they were so very loud."

Sephora, who had heard something of the dreadful rites of Moloch and Baal, but who had never imagined that Israel had been polluted with their worship since the time of the captivity, or suspected that any of their deluded votaries lived so near her, trembled with horror at this recital; and the moans of the poor child pierced her heart a thousand times more than they did before. She lifted up the loose covering that was thrown over it, and shuddered to see how dreadful it was scorched.

"What! can you be the mother of that child?—can you bear to hear its groans, and think that you allowed this misery to be inflicted on it; and even now, can you listen to it, and do nothing to assuage its pains?"

"I must not," said the mother; "Baal likes to hear its cries, so I must endure them. He was angry at my refusing at first to have him pass through the fire, and sent that great storm, and I dare not offend him again."

"Some wicked creature has been imposing on you," said Sephora. "How should an image made by men's hands, be able to raise a storm? how should an idol that has no sense be offended? But if it is that power of darkness, that beguiles one man to make, and another to worship such things whom you fear to offend, why should

that thought trouble you? for the more we offend him, the more we please the true God, who made the world and all things in it."

"You may take the child and do what you will with him," said the mother.

Sephora, who never disdained to help a fellow creature, gladly undertook the office of relieving this poor little sufferer. She wetted rags in cooling liquids, and kept applying them to its scorched body, till the pain was so much abated that the child fell asleep.

Nothing could exceed the joy and gratitude of the little girl when she found her brother grew so much easier from Sephora's care. She kissed her hands with untaught grace, told her that she should never be able to forget her, and said she wished her mother worshipped the same God that she did, the God that liked little children to rejoice before him, and not the one who was pleased with their cries. That, when she saw them crossing the river the day before, and all looking so happy, she was sure no one could be going to be burnt to the God of the plain, as they were to the God of the grove.

"The God that we worship," said Sephora, "is not an image. He is a Spirit every where present. He made all things, and knows all things. It is he that created the mother and the child to love each other, and implanted those kind affections in our hearts which it is almost impossible for the most wicked wholly to stifle; but if we resist their influence and refuse to pity those whom we cannot but love, he is justly angry, and we may feel something of the beginnings of his anger in a disturbed mind which can find no peace, nor can we ever find it till we turn from sin and vanity to the love of the living God. The feast of tabernacles, for which we have been

preparing, is very different from those held in honor of idols. We all live together for eight days under huts made of the branches of trees. The poor and rich all fare alike and are as brothers. This feast was instituted to remind us of the time when our forefathers lived in the wilderness before they came to this beautiful country; and it was also ordained to make us remember, that even this happy land in which we now abide, is but a wilderness, in comparison of that better world to which every moment brings the child of God nearer and nearer. It teaches us to consider ourselves but as pilgrims and strangers upon earth—to look on all men as our brethren and to be ready to divide our abundance with them. If your mother will let you go with me, I will take you the day after to-morrow to the plains of Zaanaim and explain every thing to you; you will then learn how different a Being the only true God is, from those wicked ones you imagine when you worship idols.”

“What!” said the little girl, “do all that multitude of people that crossed the river yesterday and to-day, know the only true God? Why then do they not take pains to tell us of him, and try to make us leave those wicked idols?”

“But how could they know that you were idolaters?”

“If they did not know that we were idolaters, they must know that all the nations round about us are, and why do they not go amongst them and teach them better? I think, if I were sure that there was but one God, who could make people happy, and knew there were a great many who had never heard of him, that I should be for going or sending all over the world to tell of him, and to persuade people to love him, and not to burn any more poor little children.”

“Perhaps,” said Sephora, “one reason why they do not act as you say you should do, is because the shock-

ing things belonging to your worship never happened to fall under their observation. For though I am afraid there are a great many amongst that multitude who know little of the true God but his name, and who never think upon his commandments to do them; yet I can scarcely persuade myself that one could be found who would not have shuddered to see that poor devoted child, and hear his piteous moans, and who would not gladly have done what they could to ease his sufferings. But people do not think much of misery when they do not see it. I never thought of the wickedness of idolatry so much before, because I never till now saw the shocking effects of it; nor had I any idea that it could so sear a parent's heart, as to make her behold, unmoved, the agonies of her infant child."

The poor woman, who had 'done what she could all the day to stifle a mother's feelings, and who had suffered much more exquisite torments, than those the flames inflicted on her poor babe, now felt relieved from some of that thralldom in which she had long been held by Baal's priests, and she dared to relieve her oppressed heart by sobs and tears.

She took Sephora's hand with that mingled feeling of respect, of affection and of confidence, with which she would have touched the hand of a guardian angel. She tried in vain to speak but could not articulate for many minutes. At last she said, "Take me with you too, and teach me to know your God, for I have done with mine."

Sephora was now in her turn overcome by her feelings. She sat down in silence, and her thoughts fled where it would weary the world to follow them, yet did she find at that moment, what they perhaps have been seeking

all their lives in vain, a plenitude of joy that left no room to wish for a happiness beyond that she experienced.

Perhaps many will listen with incredulity to this fact, but let them remember that happiness must be somewhere, or there never would be that universal desire implanted in us to seek after it, and those who have all their lives been pursuing without having ever yet attained, would do well to leave their old paths, and seek that more excellent way of true religion, where thousands and thousands of rejoicing souls can attest, that she is to be found in such transcendent brightness, that she beams through all the sorrows of this life; through poverty, through sickness, through contempt, through reproach. These things may for a time obscure, but they can never extinguish, that happiness, which the love of God sheds in the heart of man. The sun may be dimmed by the storm, but it still remains perfect in itself, and spends the brightness of its golden beams on those very clouds which look so dismal to those who only see them on their gloomy side. So the sorrows of the child of God, though outwardly they look so dark and cheerless, are inwardly illumined by the hope of glory.

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## CHAPTER XV.

SEPHORA did not stay much longer at the boatman's cottage, before she was called away by her companions,

who had all been brought safely across the river, and were now ready to proceed to their different destinations, some to the right hand and others to the left. But, however various their course might be, one sentiment of gratitude very generally pervaded their mind, for their deliverance from the peril to which they had so recently been exposed. But with most it was a very transient feeling, only born to die.

When Sephora reached her home, she found her mother sitting up for her, and to the full as cheerful as usual, yet she thought there was something of constraint in her manner, and feared that she had in some way given her offence, perhaps by not immediately obeying her in the morning, when she signified her desire that she should go to the plain with those companions who called for her. For Pythonissa always liked to be implicitly obeyed, and wanted that nicety of mental perception which makes the movements of one mind intelligible to another. She therefore only saw that her daughter was unwilling to do as she desired, without perceiving what it was that occasioned her reluctance.

They had not long remained together before Pythonissa told Sephora that she looked very tired, and advised retiring to their rooms, which counsel the latter was willing enough to take, for she was in truth quite weary with her exertions and ready for rest.

She could not tell how long she had been in that profound kind of sleep which is the wages of healthful toil, when she was roused by the same dismal sound by which she had been alarmed once before. She started up with sudden fear, and found her way in the dark to her mother's door, almost before she could recollect herself or knew what her intentions were. Here she was seized

with fresh alarm, for she now distinctly perceived that these sounds came from Pythonissa's room.

An habitual dread of offending her, made her hesitate in this fearful moment as she laid her trembling hand on the latch of the door, and gently raised it. What was her horror and astonishment at this moment, to see her poor mother with dishevelled hair, tearing and scattering it as she did at her father's funeral, and walking round and round uttering all those inhuman sounds which now horrified her more than ever.

She knew not what to do, she saw that her mother's senses were gone, and in the resemblance she traced in these obsequies to those of her father's funeral, she no longer doubted in the least the cause of her distraction. She feared going into the room to her lest it should irritate her more, for she was aware that she had no strength that could resist hers, should she become violent; she therefore determined on watching her to see that she did herself no harm till she could get some assistance.

Pythonissa continued exactly the same movements for a considerable time, she then advanced to the table, and directed Sephora's eyes towards it, for she had before been so intent on watching her mother, that she had seen nothing else. A lamp stood upon it which shed the full blaze of its light on a basin of blood, and a book marked with curious characters and figures was spread open before it.

Pythonissa examined these figures with great attention, then dipped her finger in the blood, and traced something like them on the floor till she had formed them into a circle, studying the book between every figure she drew, till the whole was complete; after which she again uttered the same shocking sounds she had done before, tearing and scattering her hair, and appearing to suffer

the utmost extremity of frantic horror which nature was capable of enduring. After this she became more calm, she swept up her torn hair, and carefully washed out the bloody characters, hid the book in an old chest, and taking up the bason in one hand and the lamp in the other, walked towards the door. Sephora had scarcely time to step aside before she passed her, and cautiously unclosing the outer door, walked forward towards the river. She tried to follow her and to cry after her, but she found it in vain; she knew not what became either of herself or her mother, but her worst fears were without foundation, for on opening her eyes again, the first object she saw was Pythonissa entering the door with only the lamp in her hand. Sephora retreated to her own room, and after some time, finding by her mother's manner of breathing that she was asleep, she approached softly towards her to see how she looked. Her appearance was not altered, but her rest seemed merely, and indeed scarcely, a bodily rest. It was plain to see that her mind was still disturbed by those same ideas that distracted her when she was awake; at one time her finger moved gently as if she was tracing some figure, then she rubbed it violently over in the most hurried manner, as if to efface what she had written. This last idea was the one that seemed to predominate in her disturbed imagination. Her hand moved so incessantly that it looked at length almost like a convulsive motion.

Poor Sephora, as she watched this melancholy sight, doubted how she should act, or what she should do. Many thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, but none that gave her any hope of comfort; till at length it occurred to her that she would go and consult the physician, her father's friend, at Mount Carmel.

As soon as she had come to this determination, she

set about accomplishing it. She thought there could not be a more favorable moment for leaving her mother than while she was in this profound sleep, and she hoped before there was a probability of her awakening that she should be able to send Zepho and one of his daughters to her, to watch over her and take care of her till her return from Mount Carmel.

She accordingly prepared herself and Emmor for departure, and calling on their faithful old servant, told him something of her fears and where she was going, and conjured him to lose no time in hastening to their house, and to enter it very softly that her poor mother might not be disturbed; and when she awoke, not to say where Sephora was gone if he could avoid it, lest it should make her more violent.

Poor Zepho, who was as much interested for his master's family as if it had been his own, was much shocked at this account, and promised to do all he could in taking care of his mistress till Sephora's return. His daughter, too, engaged to follow her father as soon as she had done what was necessary for her own family.

Zepho lost no time in getting ready, and his attention was so wholly taken up in pondering on this heavy calamity, that he even forgot his sheep till he was far advanced towards the house, when seeing a shepherd crossing his path with his flock, the remembrance of his own, who were fast penned in their fold, occurred to him, and he stood irresolute which way to move. The interest of his sheep was habitually nearest his heart, and the more he thought of the poor creatures bleating for their pasture, the higher his compassion rose, till at length the distracted Pythonissa scarcely found a place in his thoughts, and he turned his feeble steps back towards

the straggling row of huts where he lived, to send some one to shepherd the flock.

This was the day that Zepho had proposed to drive them to the plain. The old man to whom he applied to take charge of them, who was almost his cotemporary in age, reminded him of this circumstance, and then leaning on their staffs, they fell into chat of who had taken their flocks, and who had not, and who proposed to go this day, and who the next, till Zepho's mind became so full of his neighbor's concerns, that he quite forgot his own, and Sephora's charge never occurred to him till his companion asked him, what was the reason that he could not take his sheep to the plain to-day? Then his poor mistress, and his promise, and his lost time, came all to his recollection, and he walked off almost without answering.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

SEPHORA all this time was diligently pursuing her course towards Mount Carmel. She passed by the rock cottage, which had been undecorated and untouched since Patrobus died, and in that luxuriant country, where the growth of vegetation is so rapid, it looked as if it was fast returning to the state in which they had originally found it.

It was not an object to cheer her, nor yet was the

stony valley, in which her father closed his eyes, nor the rock crowned with the dark turrets of the castle, whose deserted courts were the last they traversed together when they proved but the prelude to the more silent ones of death.

The road to Carmel lay through this valley, and wound round the foot of the rock. It was one of those oppressive days when not a leaf moves, and she felt that the heavy calm that sat on all nature added another weight to press down her desponding heart. She wished she could feel the relief of those tears which, according to the pagan fable, tempered the human clay. But they gave no vent to her griefs. Her distress seemed too great and too complicated for such an alleviation. The death of her father—the distraction of her mother—her own loneliness—travelling a road she had never been before—presenting herself to a person she had never seen. All these things came at once in their fullest force upon her mind.

A pagan knew the solace of tears, but Sephora sought a more infallible soother of the human heart, and soon she could say with the royal bard: "In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts refreshed my soul." A lark at that moment springing up beneath her feet, and towering to heaven with its song, made her feel how wrong it was in her to despond, while inferior creatures rejoiced before their Maker, and were sustained from day to day by his unfailing bounty.

The road from the point of ascent to the castle was quite new to Sephora, it wound round the rock, and immediately entered on mountain scenery, which became bolder and bolder till it terminated in the abrupt headland of Mount Carmel, which stretched forward into the Mediterranean. The breeze grew fresher as she approached the sea, and felt reviving to her spirits, and on

turning an angle of the road she saw children burning fern; the light curling vapor rising in the air, and the merry little faces who were standing round it, looked cheering after passing many miles without meeting a human being. They had been entrapping sparrows on the mountains, which they were going to sell at the city of Hepha. The chorus of song, speech, and laughter was amongst them, and resounded from the rock, and at their unsorrowing age, when mirth is nature, and nature mirth, it exhilarated her even more than the ocean's breeze. She caught something of the contagion of happiness from all around her. "The insect youth were on the wing;" myriads and myriads of animated beings met her ear, her eye, and by their transports told her she served a God whose mercies were over all his works. This young group, however, could not give her any information of Yashni's dwelling, and she was obliged still to go on in uncertainty. She looked round to see where she would be likely to get intelligence, and observed a high ground to the left, which appeared to be a threshing-floor, for many asses laden with sheaves, were standing near it, and a man was busily employed in taking off their burden and spreading it on the top of the hill, while another was leading oxen towards the place, as if to tread out the corn. She advanced to the spot, but before she could reach it, the man had yoked the oxen to a wain, and was driving them swiftly round and round. The saws and spikes on the wheels and rollers of the wain made so much noise that she could not make the person who was driving it understand her inquiries, and she went forward to the other, who, with the asses that carried the sheaves, was now reposing at some distance under the shade of umbrageous chesnut trees. He was so intent on looking over a basket of herbs, and culling

the different sorts, that he did not perceive her approach till she spoke, when he raised his grey head, and, with a countenance full of benevolence, told her he was the person whose house she inquired for, and asked her what ailed her. She mentioned her name and her grief—he received her like a father, and consoled her by declaring that he did not consider her mother's mind deranged, and that he had great hopes she might soon be restored to health, if she were under his care.

Vashni immediately understood by Sephora's description, that her mother had been practising magic arts, and as he before knew that many years ago some of the priests of Baal had issued forth from Tyre, and had succeeded in establishing the worship of their idol in some of the adjacent parts of Galilee, and that Pythonissa had more than once attended their impious feasts, he did not doubt but that the gloominess of spirit which had fallen on her since her husband's death, was in consequence of her having again returned to her idolatrous practices. He did not mention his conjectures, for he could not bear to dash the happiness he had just raised, and perhaps give a more poignant sorrow than the one he had taken away. He therefore strove to amuse her as they walked towards his house, and soon the ease and cheerfulness of his manner, and that nice discernment of the feelings of others, which qualified him in an eminent measure for a physician of the mind, enabled him to restore to her the natural tone of her spirits. When he had succeeded in comforting her, and in persuading her to take some refreshment, which was very needful after all the fatigue she had undergone, he advised her to repose till the sun began to decline, and he would in the mean time prepare things for their departure, and the reception of her and her mother under his roof. He then left her

to silence and meditation, her heathy couch, and the music of the ebbing waves.

This last luxury, which was perfectly new to her, was in exact unison with her feelings, the solemn monotony of the dashing waters on the shore, and the sweep over their pebbly bed on their reflux to the deep—the thought that this always had been, and always would be, till the world should be no more—that the warning ocean still continued thus awfully to count the time to nature, while successive generations of thoughtless mortals passed rapidly away. These and other solemn musings stole through her mind, and though she could not sleep, the stillness of all the passions was as soothing, and almost as reviving to her spirits as the forgetfulness of repose could have been. She saw by the shadows that the sun was beginning to go down, and heard with pleasure Vashni's approaching step to summon her to depart.

He led her a short way from the house to a chariot he had prepared to fetch her mother in, and seating her in it they drove off. The route they were forced to take, in order to find a way wide enough for the vehicle they travelled in, was much more circuitous than the one she had taken in the morning. They wound round the foot of Mount Carmel, and entered a narrow defile among rocks, whose prodigious height made them look up with fear and awe, while every turn presented them with some new object to keep alive surprise, and the scenery being all of one bold character, it gave at once the charm of change and of continuance. The goats and antelopes, the free-born denizens of these wilds, gazed on the chariot as it moved slowly through their craggy pass, with a look of inquiry rather than of fear, as if they would loftily have demanded who it was that was intruding on their solitary realm. The range of the rugged mountain was

their pasture, and they either felt too secure in these inaccessible heights to dread the approach of man, or too unacquainted with his wiles to shun his presence. The rocks though bare of earth, were not destitute of vegetation; there were many clefts and fissures in them, out of which grew plants of a dark and glossy green.

"I always," said Vashni, "feel a particular kind of admiration as I look on trees growing as those do out of the arid rock, and cheering the desert with their smiles; they are like those contented sons of poverty and labor, that derive their support and comfort from some hidden source, and seem exempt from feeling the dejecting vicissitudes of life."

As Sephora approached towards home, and recognized scenes that were familiar to her, her mother again occupied all her mind. Those saddened thoughts with which she had left these objects in the morning, seemed still to hang over them as if waiting her return, that they might again take possession of her soul. As they were now getting near to her habitation, she proposed they should get out and walk, for she thought the appearance of the chariot would alarm her mother. They had not gone far, when they came in front of the house, and saw Pythonissa leaning out of one of the lattices, looking rather wildly first one way and then another, but no sooner did she recognize her daughter's approach, than her eyes were intently fixed on her, and she impatiently held out her arms as if she longed to hold her in them.

Sephora feared that all this was derangement, yet she was moved with something like a sensation of joy at this unusual token of affection, even though it were but the effect of insanity, and eagerly ran forward to meet her. Vashni scarcely knew what to think of all he saw, when he compared it with what he had heard of Pythonissa's

usual apathy. He hastened on, and when he entered the room, found her with her daughter on her bosom, but heard nothing but convulsive sobs; it was some time before she could in any other way express her feelings. Poor Sephora, during this interval suspended between hope and fear, knew not what to think. At length Pythonissa exclaimed, "My child, my child, I have never known the blessing of you before; I have never till this day known the kindness of a mother's heart. A mother do I say—do not I owe you filial as well as parental affection, since you have rescued me from the pit of destruction, and given me my better life? O Sephora! how shall I tell you of all my wickedness since your poor father's death? It was not grief for him that affected my mind with that gloom which hung over it, it was having communication with the idolatrous worshippers of Baal, from which I had been restrained during his life by my love towards him—it was a something of conflict that yet remained in my bosom, before I could entirely resolve to give myself up to the whole mystery of iniquity, that rent my heart, and made me the prey of misery. My reason was shook and almost overthrown, and my temper, which was never good, as you must too painfully have experienced, was a thousand times worse than ever. I cannot think of my anger and peevishness towards you without abhorring myself, and I can only wonder how it was that I should be blessed with such a child. I will not shock you by describing scenes of wickedness that would make you shudder; but yet for the ease of my own conscience, and out of the fulness of my heart, that now enlarges towards you in a way it never did before, I must tell you of some of my iniquities, and how I have been going on since Patrobus died.

"Whenever you went out, I constantly either attended

some meeting of idolaters, or had their priests here to visit me; and when you left off tending the flock, and took upon yourself the entire management of all our household cares, it only gave me more leisure to brood over and practise those arts of magic they had taught me. The subject sank deeper into my mind, and produced that gloominess of spirit which must have caused so much misery to you as well as to myself, and yet so infatuated was I, that I scarcely wished to be delivered from it. At least, I could not resolve to renounce the sin that caused it, and till that day when you may remember you urged me to pray, I never felt any thing like a real sorrow for the lengths I had gone in wickedness, or formed any purpose of leaving my evil ways. On the contrary, the whole bent of my thoughts was how to pursue them with the greatest secrecy. But the earnestness and affection with which you then spoke to me, made me wish to think and act as you did, and I resolved that I would try and do so; but these faint purposes were made one moment and broken the next, and it was not till the morning when we went to gather olives, as you were reciting in the valley the power and mercy of God, that I felt my heart really touched. At first I only wished to feel what you were saying, but could not. I heard the echo reply, and thought my heart was harder than the flinty rock, for no responsive voice was there. But scarcely had I thought this, ere my heart seemed to melt within me; my tears flowed, and such tears till then I think I had never shed. Yet I did not dare to address myself to the true God, till I had formally renounced the false ones.

“There was to be a great feast in honor of Baal in three days, which I had promised to attend; when it was expected by the priests, and indeed I had almost deter-

mined in my own mind, that I would entirely give myself up to their abominable delusions, and utterly forswear the God of my fathers. I now resolved to attend this meeting, not for this infamous purpose, but to renounce all such assemblies of iniquity for ever. Alas! I did not then know how frail I was; I did not then know how inefficient a resolution formed in my own strength, was to accomplish its purpose, nor how dangerous it is to run into temptation with the hope of vanquishing it.

"As the hour approached, I sometimes found my heart veering between good and evil. I often felt a restless desire to know the whole mystery of magic, which would sometimes appear to me as a most bewitching sin; so that I scarcely knew how to lay it aside, and to have done prying into futurity. And yet, I think I may say, that the full purpose of my heart, when I went to the feast yesterday, was to abjure all idols for ever. But I was not then so far humbled as to intend ever to confess to you that I had had any thing to do with them. I think I could as soon have died as declared my iniquity. Now, on the contrary, it seems a relief to my mind to acknowledge my vileness, and abase myself before you.

"You were scarcely gone yesterday with your friends to drive their flocks to the plain, before I set off to Baal's feast. I had far to go; some of the priests came to meet me, and particularly one who had most influence over me, advanced almost to the boundary of our land mark. He had been here the night before, and I was alarmed at finding his magic lamp on your table. He had promised to bring it to me after he had performed his own incantations; and I supposed had inadvertently left it there.

"I thought myself fortunate in going into your room, while you were asleep, and in bringing it away before you could have seen it; and yet this narrow escape from

discovery occasioned me so much perturbation, that when I heard you coming into the room half an hour afterwards, I feigned sleep to hide the cowardice and commotion of guilt. I took this precious instrument with me, and restored it to its owner, feeling some triumph over myself that I had not attempted to try its virtues, or find out its hidden power. He welcomed it as a most miraculous boon, and assured me it had been taken from him the night before by an angel, who had suddenly appeared to him as he was invoking a spirit of another order; but the demon who inhabited the lamp was stronger than the being who had wrested it from him, and that when the flame was expired, which had been lit by mortal hands, the angel had no power to retain it, but was constrained to return it, by putting it into the hands of one of the faithful worshipers of Baal, who though she had been partly seduced from her stedfastness by the sophistry of an artful daughter, he doubted not, and he would dare positively to prophesy, would this day become acquainted with all those mysteries for which her mind had been so long preparing; and that from henceforth she would be teased and distracted no more by doubts and fears, but all uncertainties being removed from her mind, futurity would become unveiled before her.

“As he delivered the latter part of his speech, his voice altered, his eyes rolled, and his whole body became convulsed as if he was impelled to utter these words. Whether that were really the case, or whether he only counterfeited the voice and gesture of demoniac inspiration, I know not.

“Many more priests now came forward to meet me; they knew where my weakness lay, and what temptations would be most likely to prevail; and did all they could to flatter my pride and provoke my curiosity; and when

they saw that I was endeavoring to resist these snares, they tried to work upon my terror, and took me into a dark cavern, where they presented several horrid sights to me; strange apparitions with heavy countenances stood before me, and I heard the peeping, muttering wizards of the deep.

“A violent tempest of thunder, whirlwind and hail came on, which reverberated with tremendous sounds through the hollow rock, while the lightning descended through the fissures of the den, and filled it with the alternate blaze and darkness of the angry heavens. Wild shrieks at intervals were heard above the storm, and they persuaded me that it was the vengeance of the indignant gods that was going to fall on my devoted head, unless I instantly consecrated myself to them.

“I was so wrought on by my fears, and by the delusions and wickedness of my own mind, which still secretly inclined towards idolatry, that I promised all they required, and had a curious book of magic given me with instructions how to use it; but I was not to attempt it till the second watch of the night. I felt a restless desire for this time to come; every moment seemed an hour till the prescribed time of practising my incantations. At length it arrived, and I unrolled my curious book, and went through all the mystic evolutions of iniquity, which I had been instructed to do, till my senses seemed almost gone, and I felt more like a fury than a woman. I then carefully obliterated all the magic characters, and put away every trace which could lead to discovery, for the greatest horrors were to be my portion if any of the uninitiated found out what had been done.

“This idea of the importance of concealment, seemed to be almost the only one that was left me; and it continued to harass me in the most dreadful manner, after I

had fallen asleep. Sometimes I fancied that I heard you coming, and the harder I rubbed the characters in the magic circle, the brighter they appeared, till at last they became a scorching flame that consumed my soul. Then the remembrance of my good resolutions came to torment me; you and Patrobus appeared to me far off in happiness, while I was still in the cavern that was now filled with horrible and eternal night. I heard a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains, and the rushing sound of beasts that could not be seen. There appeared a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful; and the things that I saw not, appeared worse than those I saw: yet was I to myself darker than the darkness, and more scorching than the sulphureous flame. But I will not attempt to describe the terrors of my mind; I can only wonder that I survived them. At length, after what appeared to me ages of torment, I awoke; and, oh! what gratitude flowed into my mind, to find it was a dream; I felt as one raised from the pit of destruction by the mercy of the Almighty.

“All those religious truths, all those promises of God delivered by the mouths of the prophets, which Patrobus for more than twenty years had been endeavoring to impress upon my mind, and which used to seem more wearisome and unmeaning to me than the babbling of the brook, now came with force to my heart. They had lain on my memory like the dry bones strewed through the open valley in the vision of Ezekiel; but now the spirit of the Lord breathed upon them, they came together clothed with life and glory. At first, they shed celestial comfort on my soul; then I was tempted for many hours to despair, and to say, “these things are not for me, the heavens were for an instant opened to me, only that I might see what I am excluded from, and the

blackness of darkness is reserved for me for ever :” but blessed be God, he dispelled this dreadful gloom, this death of seven-fold horrors.

“ I fell down before him, entreating him to make me what I ought to be, and never again to leave me to myself, and to the delusions or the misgivings of my own wicked heart. Groans, and words, and tears, and sighs, mingled together, and made a language that could only be intelligible to that Being, who reads the heart. Poor Zepho, I believe, did not know how to understand it, for when I became composed enough to perceive that he was sitting by me, I found his looks full of terror and pity. He has never left me all the day, nor would he suffer me to go in search of you, whom I supposed to be somewhere with the flock on the plain, but kept watching over me with such incessant and anxious attention, that at last I began to suspect you must in some way have been alarmed by me in the night, and thought that you were perhaps gone somewhere for help for me. Ah, my dear child ! you had already been to the only unfailing fountain of health and strength, and I feel that the healing waters of life that now overflow my soul, have been drawn down upon it by your prayers.”

Pythonissa held her daughter to her heart as she said this ; and Sephora was too full of gratitude to heaven to reply.

## CHAPTER XVII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the happy change that had taken place in Pythonissa, and which seemed to make her removal from home unnecessary, Vashni would not allow his friends to give up the purposed visit to him. He told Sephora that he was sure by her mother's appearance, as well as by her description of what her mind had gone through, that her health must have suffered in the conflict, and that it would be advisable, though not absolutely necessary, that she should be under his care. He begged therefore that they would be prepared to accompany him very early in the morning, as he wished to be ready to attend the solemn procession as it marched with dance and song towards the place where the feast was to be celebrated. They promised he should not have to wait for them, for they would have been equally sorry as himself to miss this opportunity of rejoicing before their Creator, and acknowledging the mercies which he had showered down upon them.

Pythonissa, who had hitherto made one in those processions, and mechanically followed the steps and voice of the multitude, without having one sensation of gratitude excited in her mind, now felt her heart overflow with the mere idea that she should so soon have an opportunity of publicly testifying her thankfulness, for being delivered from more perilous wanderings, than those her forefathers had known in their passage through the deserts; and the mercy of God struck her as very great,

in allowing a sacrifice for sin as a token of peace, and as a type and assurance of the promised Saviour. She bid Zepho select the most spotless lamb of the flock, and give him on the morrow to the Levites, on the plains of Zaanaim, to be offered up for her as a sacrifice for sin. And as she gave this charge, she wept at the thought that the innocent must bleed for the guilty.

Sephora, who always took the active part, was now obliged to leave her mother and her friend in conversation she would gladly have staid to listen to, while she went to prepare for their departure.

They lived and dressed with so much simplicity, that it did not take her very long to arrange things they were to leave behind, or to pack up those they were to take with them. Here were none of those tinkling ornaments, and cauls, and tires, and chains, and bracelets, and ornaments for the legs, and head-bands, and tablets, and earrings, and rings, and nose-jewels, and changeable suits of apparel, for which the prophet reprov'd the pride of the daughters of Zion. Pythonissa's errors had, latterly at least, not much declined into personal vanity. And Sephora, from a child, had always been plain in her attire, and preferred simplicity to splendor. This might be, because she saw her father liked it best, or it might be her own natural taste, but whatever first induced the habit, it certainly since had been strengthened and confirmed by seeing, that vanity or pride in any shape is forbidden by the voice of God, and by feeling that it is the natural and irreconcilable enemy of spiritual peace.

As soon as she had made things ready for their departure, she set out their supper, which they all partook of with true cheerfulness of heart, and felt that a meal of herbs, where love is, is far better than all the dainties of the earth without it. Vashni was not at all offended at

their simple mode of living. His own was almost equally remote from every species of luxury, only as his family was generally larger, his table was consequently on a more extended scale, and as there were often those among his inmates whose health was so impaired as to be unable to taste the coarser food of life, for them he provided what was suitable to their infirmities. Vashni was glad to find his young friend so active and ready at those domestic duties, which, in more polished countries, are sometimes thought to have a natural tendency to debase the mind, and disqualify it for higher enjoyments. But he had always thought that luxury and dissipation were much more apt to weaken the intellect and degrade the man, than the most servile offices of life, and that the hewers of wood and drawers of water were far from being the meanest part of the creation.

He had in his time been a great rover over the earth, and had seen life in much more pompous, as well as under much ruder forms, than those which were usual among his own people, and he thought that the pastoral life, which was so generally followed in his own beloved land, had greatly the advantage of every other; that it had a tendency to raise the mind and to fill it with grand images of nature,—the roll of seasons—the alternate and progressive change to perfection and decay, of the vegetable world—the sustaining hand of providence, filling all things living with plenteousness. Daily and hourly witnessing these works of God, he thought ennobled unconsciously the mind of man. But, however this might be, he was sure that there was a more general purity of life among them than in any other country he had visited, and that they were farther removed from the excesses of barbarism and luxury. He did not then place this difference to the true account—their knowl-

edge of the only God. He had left his native land with a veneration for the religion of his ancestors, but it was only since his return to it, that he had known its pervading power, or felt how it subdues all things to itself, and how all things become religion to the mind of the religious. He knew that the mass, even of his own people, felt none of this, but he was aware also that they found something of its influence even where they disowned its power, and that the multitude, like the clod of earth in the fable which had lain next the rose, had imbibed some of the fragrance of the flower of heavenly mindedness, though it still remained but earth itself.

Pythonissa, Sephora, and Vashni, were ready with the dawn of morning to set forward towards Mount Carmel. Sephora could scarcely persuade herself that but one day had passed since she went there alone, friendless, disconsolate, and almost without a hope on this side the grave. How soon had the dark clouds of sorrow been chased away, and joy, like the clear shining after rain, succeeded to their place. She was now with a friend who had shown himself ready to comfort her grief and rejoice in her happiness, with a mother whose very soul seemed changed to love. Whichever way she looked, the prospect was bright before her, the horizon of happiness was unclouded, and hope and expectation darted their beams over the immediate foreground of life. She was going to new scenes and new society with spirits raised to enjoy them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE sun was just rising on the earth when the travellers approached the foot of the rock on which was seated the Canaanitish castle. A crimson light from the east glowed on its dark towers, and showed the ivy and waving fern, which grew on its time-worn walls, with great distinctness and beauty. The foaming river had not yet caught any of its beams. The rocks on the opposite banks were covered with the large golden blossoms of the prickly pear, and though in the full glare of day they had almost too gaudy an appearance, yet seen by this light when only their high summits were enlightened by the first oblique rays of the sun, they added very much to the richness and beauty of the scene.

Pythonissa had been accustomed to look on the charms of her native country with great indifference. She saw nothing in that land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills, to excite her admiration, though their great lawgiver had spoken of them with prophetic rapture. But now that her mind was opened by gratitude, and she looked on the varied works of the creation, as the operation of the hand of that God who had pardoned all her iniquities, received her into his favor, and filled her with desires after virtue. She saw them with other eyes, and felt that there are pure delights in this world that the guilty know not of.

Vashni was afraid that if they went first to his house, they would not be in time to join the procession, and wit-

ness the sacrifices that were to be offered near the foot of Mount Carmel on that side facing the sea. He therefore proposed that they should go as far up the hill in the chariot as the road would admit of, and that they should then quit it and let it proceed empty to his house, while they wound round the top of the hill and descended the other side.

The day was yet in its earliest prime, when they commenced their walk towards the altar of sacrifice. The mists of night still hung on the top of Carmel, but were slowly yet visibly being chased away by the breath of morning, leaving its silvery drops on all the short and fragrant mountain herbage. The breeze seemed fraught with health, and with each peculiar freshness of the land and ocean. The sea looked calm, deep, and silent, except where it broke over the rude points of rock that advanced into it from Mount Carmel, and girded them with its white and restless foam.

They continued ascending the mountain, and soon reached a summit that filled them with reverence and admiration. They looked immediately down an abrupt and considerable depth of rock, feathered with shrubs of various tints, into a large hollow plain of refreshing verdure. Here were assembled in solemn silence all the inhabitants of that populous and fertile country, for many furlongs round. The stillness of such a multitude was most impressive. The calmness of the untroubled deep that lay stretched out in boundless prospect beyond them, formed a striking illustration of the scene, at the same time that it added to its force. The attention of the people was all directed to one object. An altar of rough unhewn stone stood in the centre, and the priests were just preparing to offer the sacrifices. The victims were placed on it, and the rocks soon reverberated with the

rending sound of the silver trumpets which were blown over them—the flame was kindled, and as the smoke arose in curling wreaths towards heaven, the people bowed down their heads and worshiped.

As soon as the sacrifices were consumed, the signal was given for departure, and almost with the quickness of thought the multitude were arranged for solemn procession, and all voices and instruments at once struck up a song of thanksgiving to Almighty God, accompanied with graceful dance.

The dance of the Hebrews was to their poetry, what action is to eloquence, a mere heroic and impassioned gesture—so that they seemed, if we may so express it, to move in metre, and the body as by an irresistible impulse, to demonstrate the exalted feelings of the mind, and the devout ecstasies of the soul. The combined effect of the whole man being thus taken up in adoration of his Creator, can scarcely be conceived by those who make the deadness of the affections towards spiritual things, the very test of a superior mind.

The procession having moved once round the place of sacrifice, passed through a cleft in the rock, and disappeared from sight. Vashni said they were going up the winding path among the crags, and that by taking a nearer way they should be able to join them, long before they reached the tabernacles of Carmel. They lingered for a few moments where they were, to hear the fainter song of praise rise from behind the rocks. The words could not be distinguished, but the well-known melody spoke as distinctly to their feelings as the most articulate voice could have done, and called forth responsive affections of gratitude and love. Pythonissa's mind was so engrossed by devotion, that she forgot all her timidity, and walked fearlessly down the precipice, which, with

her two assistants, she had almost shuddered to climb. When they had reached the bottom they turned to the left, and by a winding path which the sheep had made through the cistus and mountain heath, which there grew thickly entangled together, they soon entered the most closely wooded part of Mount Carmel, through which the procession was to pass. Exercise, and the sun, which was now risen so much higher in the heavens, made the shade of the trees very welcome to them. They sat down on the trunk of a palm tree that had been recently torn up by a storm, probably by that awful one they had lately witnessed.

Here they remained, waiting the approach of the minstrels and people. The ground was thinly scattered with deciduous leaves, and others fell at intervals on those already down, with a sound that whispered something of mortality to the musing mind. The song of the minstrels was soon indistinctly heard, and then lost among the intercepting rocks. But ere many minutes, the whole chorus burst upon their ear, and seemed to pierce the skies. They turned their eyes the way the sound came, expecting to behold the procession, but though they could see some way down the gentle declivity of the green glade, up which it was to pass, they looked for some time with eager expectation before it appeared. At length it approached, first the priests, then the men with instruments of music, after them the virgin choir with timbrels and dances, and lastly, the mixed multitude of men, women, and children, all following in regular procession, carrying branches of palm and citron in their hands. Many had phylacteries bound round their foreheads and wrists, and every description of person wore their garments fringed with that ornamental flower-work tied with cords of blue, which, in an unlettered age, was

ordained for them as a token by which to remember the commands of the Almighty God, that they might suppose them, as it were, written upon the borders of their vesture; and being taught to read these signs in their youth, when the memory is impressible and tenacious, they never forgot them in after life, and could not look upon this ornament without remembering why they wore it.

From the place where the trio were sitting, they saw the whole band at once, and it made a beautiful appearance, advancing up the canopied glade, which presented something between the sombre light of the deep forest walks, and the sunny path of the embroidered plain—a sportive mixture of light and shade, which seemed well to accord with the nature of this holy solemnity—with the festive gladness for which it was instituted—and with the religious awe that tempered its mirth.

The grand chorus of voices had now ceased, and the minstrels were singing in different divisions. The female band were chanting as they advanced, not all at once, but in responsive measures. The sweetness of their voices, the grace of their steps moving in their dance, the pureness of their snowy vestments, and the lustre of youth, which beamed in their countenance, and quickened all their form—added much to the beauty and impressiveness of a scene that must impose upon the senses, even where it failed to touch the heart. They waited till the procession had passed, and then taking branches in their hands, they joined the band that continued ascending the glade through the wood for about half a furlong further, till they came to a steep part of the hill that looked almost like an artificial mound. Some rude steps which were formed in the path that led up this acclivity, landed them on a level plain, in some respects

very similar to the one on which they had offered sacrifice. The further part of it was inclosed by another abrupt rise in the mountain, in a semicircular form facing the north-west, and along the foot of this steep rock were placed the tabernacles, shining with as much freshness as if they imbibed nourishment from the ground on which they stood.

At the sight of these appointed dwellings, all the instruments and every voice at once struck up, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel; as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the tree of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, as cedar trees beside the waters. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

The congregation wheeled round the plain as they sung this, and then stopped before their rustic tents. A sufficiency of tabernacles were erected for the stated inhabitants of Carmel and its neighborhood, but none were provided for strangers; these were now to be formed out of the branches that each person carried in their hand, which was considered as a token that all welcomed them, and were desirous of providing for their comfort. Several of these huts were speedily erected, and the best and most adorned appropriated to Sephora and her mother, and furnished with every thing necessary for their accommodation. The tabernacles that were immediately near theirs, were likewise appointed for Vashni's friends. He mentioned some of them to his new guests as being particularly worthy of their regard, and seeing that Tarah, Flavius, Miriam, and Caphtor, were then sitting on the edge of the plain that bordered on that declivity of wood they had ascended in their march, he walked up to them with Sephora and her mother, and

sitting down by their side recommended them to the kindness of each other, told them that they were all in a peculiar manner the children of the same God, and that they might all look with one mind and one pleasure over their heavenly father's works.

Here was indeed a beautiful display of them, the rich expanse of wood, down which the eye swept as it sought the boundless ocean that lay stretched beyond it, was richly varied with all the splendid colors of decaying nature. The birds, both of the sea and land, were incessantly skimming over it, and displaying their expanded plumage, bright with the glossiness of life and liberty. The Penguin and other sea fowl of more sombre hue and habits, were standing in ranks upon the sands, on an unmolested part of the coast, watching the waves unfurl themselves against the sounding shore, while further out at sea the halcyons were distinctly seen dancing on the heaving bosom of the deep. None of their own ships were at this time occupied in the waters, but the distant sail of other nations were here and there interspersed in the scene. The promontory of Mount Carmel itself, with all its variety of rock, and wood, and vineyard, and mountain pasture, closed the view on the left.

As they were looking with admiration over all this scene, and were as sensible of a gracious God in all they saw and all they felt, as they were of the soft and invisible air that encompassed them—the sound of distant silver trumpets, with lengthened note, swelled on the eastern gale, and enlarged all the devout feelings of Pythonissa's mind. She arose and fell prostrate on the earth in deep humility. She knew that it was the time of sacrifice on the plains of Zaanaim, and she prayed that her sin offering might be accepted, while she poured fourth the incense of a contrite heart.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE whole congregation were soon now beginning to be busily engaged in arranging their provisions for dinner. Vashni and his friends spread out their repast under the shade of some oaks that grew at the edge of the plain, about half a furlong from where they had been sitting. Every face was animated by business and pleasure; all were running here and there, fetching and carrying their stores, or dispersing them gracefully on their enamelled table.

The different groups were soon assembled, but they did not immediately sit down. They waited in silence till everything was completely arranged, when a zemiroth was solemnly pronounced at the head of each company. Some of these blessings were chaunted, others only said. Each division waited till the next to it had finished; and when grace had been said by all, they sat down to the social feast. There were almost a hundred in Vashni's company, and many others equally numerous were near. The hum of such a multitude of voices was almost too much for Pythonissa, who was already languid with the exertions of the day. But that which was overpowering to declining health, seemed exhilarating to the robust; and social joy and mirth protracted the meal much beyond its ordinary length, till at a signal given all voices ceased, while God was again acknowledged as the giver of every happiness. When this form had passed through all their companies, they removed from their places, the

fragments were gathered up, and they again assembled in front of their tabernacles, and seated themselves in a double circle, when the recitation of sacred poesy began.

Some simply recited what had been written before; others spoke from the immediate inspiration of their own mind, in unpremeditated verse; and others in part in borrowed thoughts, and in part from their own. Most of them took instruments of music, in their hand, and all made use of the most expressive gesture, so that a foreigner, who knew not a root of their language, would have comprehended much of their meaning from their action alone.

The recitations lasted between two and three hours. Tarah, Caphtor, Amana, Gadara and Sephora, were among the most interesting of the proclaimers. There were several others who spoke, and all of these sufficiently well to create an attentive, though not a rapturous silence.

Tarah was from the borders of Zebulon; and Caphtor and Gadara from the precincts of Mount Hermon. These, as well as Sephora being all strangers, were naturally struck with those objects which recalled to their mind some memorable fact of their sacred history; and this elevated spot presented many such to their view.

Tarah took for his subject Kadish, one of the cities of refuge.

Caphtor spoke of the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, when fire descended from the skies to consume it, and the water which had been poured on it to deaden it, served but as fuel to the heavenly flame; showing how ineffectual are all human means, to check or counteract that work which the Lord has ordained shall prosper.

Gadara took for his theme the destruction of Jabin's army, and treated the subject with such animation, that

words became things by the enchantment of his eloquence. He brought every circumstance of Israel's deliverance so exactly before his audience, as also their previous degradation, and those sins which were at once the omen and the cause of misery, that they were all ready to shout the praises of him who had led captivity captive, and to exclaim with the enthusiasm of the prophetess who struck off the head of the heathen—"So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength."

Sephora next took a Timbrel in her hand, and advanced within the circle to speak of those ancient cities of renown, the fallen and the risen Tyre. She first took up a lamentation for her, whose extinction shook the isles, and made the princes of the sea clothe themselves with trembling. She dropped her Timbrel, and taking up her Kinoor, an instrument of magic sound, struck some sorrowing chords to prepare the minds of her auditors for what she was about to utter; and stretching out her hand towards that baren spot that once was Tyre, she thus began: -

"O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Sidon, whose glorious beauty was a fading flower, how art thou fallen, how art thou destroyed! Thou wast inhabited of seafaring men; the renowned city, which was strong in the tower of thy pride, and sat as a prince among the nations, and called thyself the anointed cherub, and thought the shadow of thy covering wings a refuge from every blast.

"How did the isles tremble in the day of thy fall. The very sea was troubled at thy departure; the kings of the earth were astonished at the vanishing of thy glory. Then did they know that it was surely the voice of the Almighty which had said—'I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for,

yet shalt thou never be found again ; thy pomp shall not avail thee, though the sardins, the diamond, the sapphire, the beryl are thy clothing ; yet will I destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

Here she paused as in a listening attitude, and then added in a sorrowing voice—

"The noise of thy songs has ceased ; the sound of thy harps shall be heard no more : all joy is darkened, and the mirth of thy land is gone."

Here Sephora paused, and struck some solemn chords on her Kinoor. Her expressive countenance was become pale with awe, from the emotion her theme inspired. Even nature seemed to have heard her impressive voice, for the sun at this time became obscured by clouds, and the wind sighed mournfully through her hair, disheveling it as if touched by the disordering hand of grief.

It would be difficult to give an idea of the sensation she had excited, or to realise in any measure feelings and manners that have so little assimilation with our own. We scarcely know how to bring together that assemblage of circumstances so calculated to excite deep interest in the breast of such an audience. We must bear in mind that in those times it was no infringement of female delicacy to speak before a multitude. Custom sanctioned it, and devotion sanctified it ; for it was a privilege that was never degraded by any unhallowed theme. Then we must remember, that Tyre stood actually before them, and apparently with all her outward prosperity about her ; yet was she then known to be like the painted sepulchre, full of rottenness within ; and her meretricious ornaments could but ill disguise to the prophetic eye, her failing strength and fading beauty. Even now she might be said to be in deep waters, and her final sentence, however protracted, was known to be sure.

We must consider, too, the power of music, and the charm of truth; and moreover, that Sephora's voice, the Hebrew language, and its accompanying action, were each in themselves so expressive, that the deaf might have been charmed by the sight of her eloquence, or the blind by the sound.

The assembly still kept their eyes fixed on her, hoping that when the melody of her Kinoor ceased, they should again hear her sacred recitations; but she had done; and when the diapason closed, she resumed her seat on the plain with as much simplicity as she would have done had she returned from watering her flock. Her mind was elevated above the desire, or the thought of exciting the admiration of her fellow creatures.

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## CHAPTER XX.

No one rose to speak after Sephora sat down, and the assembly soon broke up, and dispersed in various directions. When they went forth to the evening sacrifice, the people were all divided into different bands as in the morning, but, instead of carrying branches of palm and myrtle, they each bore the corban on their head, consisting of offerings of the fruits of the earth. They advanced, chaunting the simple, but affecting outline of their history, calling to mind their origin, their distresses, their deliverance, their preservation; and concluding

with a supplicatory chorus, exhorting each other to beware of the dangers of prosperity.

The different bands sang this alternately, one choir, taking up the subject as the other laid it down; and when the last in the ranks had finished, the clanging zazelims gave notice to the foremost to begin again. And thus they continued rehearsing this touching memorial of their nation till they reached the place of sacrifice.

The priests had just taken up the beginning of the subject as they passed the projection of rock.

"A Syrian ready to perish was our father; he went down to Egypt to sojourn there, and became a mighty nation.

"The people evil entreated us, and afflicted us with hard bondage; but when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and looked upon our labor and oppression.

"He brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great and terrible wonders.

"He opened a path through the sea, he met us in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness. He kept us as the apple of his eye, he led us about, he instructed us. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her pinions, and beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead us, and there was no strange God with them.

"The angel of his presence went before us; he gave us water out of the flinty rock, and fed us with manna, which our fathers knew not; until he brought us into this land of brook and streams, where we eat bread without scarceness, and where royal dainties are our portion."

"Our flocks, and our herds, and our riches, and all that we have is multiplied. But let us not say our own

power, and the might of our hand hath gotten us this wealth. Let not our heart be lifted up to forget the Lord our God, who brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage."

They waited till all had passed by. The strangers always closed the procession, as they did not carry any offerings, but presented them by the hands of the priests in the respective congregations to which they belonged. Pythonissa and Sephora were among the last of the solemn train, and they joined it in that devout silence, which was alike congenial to their feelings, and becoming creatures who were going to address their Creator. When they arrived at the place of sacrifice, the lambs which were to be offered were at their evening gambols—running races, bounding off their feet with the mere animation of innocence and happiness, and making a starting-post of the mossy pedestal of that altar on which they were so soon to become victims. The sound of the silver trumpets made them for a few minutes suspend their play, but looking one on another, and seeming to take confidence from that expression of harmlessness and purity they beheld among themselves, they again bounded forward with augmented glee, and the warning tones of death served as the incitement of renewed and redoubled playfulness.

We will not expatiate on the sad reverse of this joyous scene; but surely serious thought stole unawares into many a bosom, when they thus saw the innocent bleed for the guilty. Some inquired what this meant, and others felt and blessed its import.

After the sacrifices were consumed, the priest poured out the drink offering of wine, and approached the altar of incense, to burn the stacte, the onychx, the galbanum, and the frankincense. The mingled perfume diffused

its fragrance through the air, and slowly ascended in curling volumes towards heaven. After these religious ceremonies were concluded, the congregation returned to the tabernacles with the same observances as in the morning, and again sat down by companies on the grass to their evening repast. After supper was over, the elder priest unrolled the book of their law, and read a portion of it, and as he opened the volume, the people rose up and bowed with their faces to the ground, and appeared to listen with as much reverence as they would have done had they heard the voice as well as the words of the Deity.

They afterwards separated, and each retired to their leafy tents to meditate on what they had heard, and did not assemble again till the next morning. The priests kept alternate watch by night over the devoted flocks and herds. The number of victims offered in sacrifice were appointed to diminish each day of the feast. Perhaps to signify how they must gradually fade away, till they gave place to something better, something more abiding, something that had in it an eternal sufficiency.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

ON the second day of the feast, instead of the recitations after their noontide meal, they proposed to each other enigmatical questions. Archippus the Greek, a

proselyte of the gate, whose ambitious mind made him always restless to distinguish himself, and whose desire, even when speaking on the most sacred subjects, was to exhibit himself rather than the truth, thought that this would be a good opportunity of showing the superiority of his mind, and contempt of vulgar prejudices, by striking at once at the foundation of the believers' hope, by making them doubt the inspiration of their holy book. He accordingly began cavilling at some of those parts of it that seem most inconsistent and contradictory. He had staid away from the morning sacrifice, that he might prepare the most perplexing questions, and he flattered himself that the elders would be unable to answer them.

He first asked how God could be a God of mercy, as he had proclaimed himself to be, and yet order the Israelites when they were in the land of Egypt, to come up against a people who had done them no injury, and not only to take possession of their country, but to exercise such exceeding severities towards them, as not to leave alive any thing that breathed. How could such a cruel mandate be reconciled with a merciful God?

The aged Zarah was rising to reply, when the elders interfered, and begged that the words of experience and wisdom might not be so needlessly expended, when one of the most tender age might be appointed, who would be sufficient to parry the attacks of infidelity.

They named Caphtor of the family of Ithamar, of the tribe of Levi. The modest tint of diffidence and youth came into Caphtor's cheek at thus hearing himself called upon. He arose, and bowing himself down to the earth, said, he hoped the strength of the bulwark would be proved by the feebleness of the instrument appointed to defend it. Then turning to his opponent, he thus addressed him:—

“ You ask, Archippus, how such a command as that you have just cited, can be reconciled with a merciful God. I acknowledge that at first sight it does appear a cruel mandate. But why does it appear so?—When we read that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven on them, or that he overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, it does not strike us as an act of cruelty, but justice. Yet in both these instances the destruction was as complete, and as undistinguishing, as in the case of the Canaanites. This proves that it is not the severity of God that shocks us, but his employing man as the agent of his rigor. We think that it looks like encouraging in his creatures the fierce and malignant passions. But if we examine this objection more closely, we shall find it vanish, and be constrained to acknowledge that this decree was intended, and calculated to promote—not a love of cruelty, but a hatred of vice, and a hatred of that particular vice, to which we, and perhaps every other nation upon earth is most prone, I mean the love and worship of the creature rather than of the Creator.

“ You observed, Archippus, that the Canaanites were to the Israelites an unknown people. It is true that they were so: our fathers therefore went forth to attack them, not as their personal enemies, but as the enemies of God. They went, not merely to witness the vengeance of the Almighty against idolatry, but themselves to execute the dread decree. They heard its frantic shrieks, they received its dying groans, they trembled at its dark, expiring cry, unmingled with any ray of hope, unsoothed by any gentle beam of mercy. Can we conceive any means more likely to accomplish a proposed end, than these fearful things were to inspire the Israelites with a horror of idolatry? And in fact, if we unroll the page of his-

tory, and revert to the past, we shall find that they did accomplish greater things than all the miracles of Egypt. For we read that Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders that overlived Joshua, whereas we all too well know how soon the mercies and wonders in the land of Egypt were forgotten, and the senseless idol preferred to the living God.

"If, then, you acknowledge idolatry with all its bloody and licentious rites to be a crime—if you confess that it was good for us to be kept from it, then must you also own that this decree of the Almighty, which you just now stigmatized as cruel, was, in fact, a tender mercy. And let me call your attention to observe the wisdom of God in not reversing the sentences of Egypt and Canaan, in not taking the punishment of the latter into his own hands, and giving up the Egyptians into ours. Then indeed, would the vindictive passions have been let loose; but our Lord knew too well what was in our hearts to trust us with that work; he reserved it for his own all-tranquil mind, that even in the severest exercises of wrath remains serene, untarnished, and unmarred by any baleful passion.

"Archippus, you are of that nation that affects rationality. Does it not appear reasonable to you, that God should be a God of justice as well as of mercy? And is it not evident that he made justice subservient to mercy, when he condemned the polluted Canaanites to utter destruction, and appointed our forefathers as the executioners of his vengeance?"

Archippus did not deign any direct reply to this appeal, but said "he had a proposition to offer to the consideration of the assembly, which he thought neither Caphtor nor the elders would be able to refute. He believed that he could prove, in a way that would make it clear to

them all, that either the origin of their religion could not be divine, or else, that their present hopes of a Saviour must be altogether a delusion." This bold assertion roused every one's attention.

"You say," added Archippus, "that the law of Moses, came from God, and yet you are looking for a Messiah, who is to teach you a purer religion. Now who is this Messiah, who can he be, that he should teach you any better things than God himself taught? Or, even supposing he were God himself, would he come to frustrate his own work?"

Caphtor replied, "that he would not come to frustrate his work, but to perfect it. Observe," continued he, "that bird that towers towards heaven with its notes of praise, or this expanded flower, fragrant as the breath of morning. You acknowledge that both of these are the work of the Almighty Creator. But were not the husk, which protected and concealed this blossom, and the egg, whose inanimate mass contained the elements of the winged fowl, were not these also formed by his hand? God might, it is true, have made these things complete at once, but we find a harmony and a beauty in all the progressive changes and advances towards perfection in the natural world, and so we doubtless should in the kingdom of grace, if we were equally capable of comprehending them. The husk of the blossom is now trampled in the dust, the shell of the bird is cast away, and the law shall be superceded. But these first works of God are not the less his works because something more excellent and vital succeeds them."

Archippus, who perceived that his fame was not rising so rapidly as he expected by the questions he was proposing, now thought it prudent to maintain his dignity by a disdainful silence, and an assuming air of superiority

and pity. After he had sat down, others arose to propose their hard questions.

It was asked "What is that worldly possession which we cannot call our own, and yet if that is not our own, nothing else is?"

Some imagined it to be one thing and some another, but Matri the Benjamite, answered and said, "In this fluctuating and unstable world, who can say that the present hour is their own, and if that is not theirs, what else can be?"

It was next inquired, "Which is the truest mark of humility, to clothe ourselves in sackcloth and ashes, to bear the reproaches of our fellow-creatures with meekness, or to accept with cheerfulness those afflictions that come from the immediate hand of God?" Many thought that sackcloth and ashes were the surest test of humility. A few who had been deeply tried in the loss of their dearest relatives—in having those silver cords loosed which bound them to the love of life—were of opinion that submission to the will of God was a surer criterion. But Caphtor answered, "That bearing with meekness the reproaches of our fellow-creatures, was the surest proof of humility. For those sorrows which we inflict on ourselves, are often but a more refined kind of pride. And those which God lays on us by his own hand, we feel must be endured—we know that for man to contend with his Maker would be vain. But when we meet with vexations from our fellow-creatures, we are beset with the twofold temptation of resistance and retaliation, and it requires a superior degree of humility to be able to overcome them, and bear their reproaches with meekness."

Various other questions, more enigmatical in their form, were afterwards proposed, and changes of raiment or measures of corn given to those who expounded them.

When the questions were ended, the chief of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Caraites, the four principal sects of the Jews, rose up, and begged to discuss their different sentiments on religion, and point out to each other the absurdity of many of their opinions. Each party thought they had so much more to tell than to hear, that they were unanimous in urging this request, and the elders were about to give their consent, when the venerable Oreb, revered for his age and the meekness of his wisdom, as well as for all the noiseless and retiring virtues, rose up, and leaning on his staff, thus addressed the disputants:—

“My children, pause on what you are about to do, before you venture to expose and lay bare the wounds of the people of God. Think again, whether it would not be better by mollifying them with the precious ointment of charity, and binding them up with the ligaments of love, to endeavor to heal and assuage, rather than to exasperate and inflame.

“My children, I have felt the ardor that I am now attempting to damp. I can well recall the time when my zeal was in its youth, and the spirit of party prevailed over the spirit of God. I too, then made my own opinions the exact standard by which to measure those of others, and I secretly despised or openly condemned all those who differed from me. But since then, the mazy windings of sin, which are in the interior of my own heart, have been laid open to me, and it has made me look with a more averted eye on the frailties of my fellow-creatures. I doubt not but your intentions are good, that is, I doubt not but you imagine them to be so. But ask yourselves, whether the finger of derision and scorn ever guided you in your way towards heaven. Even if it pointed out the right path, would you be willing to follow

its direction? Be assured, that that same pride which prevented such means from being of use to you, will operate equally in the breast of others. Consider too, and ask of the times that are past, whether men were ever yet brought all to think exactly alike on any subject. You will find that even on the most trivial, their opinions differ, and much more on this momentous one of religion. Cast your eyes round on this numerous assembly, and see if you can find any one person whose features resemble your own. Yet you are satisfied that these are all men, since you find they bear the human countenance. Or, let us come within a narrower circle. Behold the friend of my youth, the ancient Libnah, of the family of the Zarhites, of the tribe of Judah. Observe where he sits beneath that branching oak, surrounded by his children and his children's children. I have often surveyed them one by one with the eye of curious affection. No two of them are alike, yet by some gracious favor, I could claim each to be the offspring of its sire.

“Do you examine them too, you will then see that you cannot find an accurate resemblance even among the nearest links of the same family. Be assured, that the mind admits of equal diversity with the body, and do not hope to meet with a more perfect similitude in the inward than the outward man. Do not expect to find exact conformity even amongst the most highly favored of the sons of Israel, but be satisfied that all belong to one Almighty Father, wherever you can trace the lineaments divine of meek humility and heavenly love. Perhaps, then you will say, are we to see each other's faults and misconceptions of divine truth, and be silent? Are we to see our brother stumbling along through dark and thorny ways, and use no endeavor to bring him into that path of light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day?

“My children, while there are diversities of opinion among us, it is impossible but some must be wrong ; and the probability is, that all are so in some degree. Self-love makes us blind to our own failings, and quick-sighted to that of others. This is true of us as individuals, and it is true of us as parties, which, when we have once embraced, our pride makes us immediately identify with ourselves. You have all deeply scrutinized each other, and I doubt not have mutually detected many errors both in theory and practice. But instead of proceeding in your purpose of exposing them to the eye of the world, let me entreat you to retire to the caves of the mountains, and there in solitude spread those grievances before the Lord, and beseech him to send forth his Spirit to rectify them. Be importunate with him, as if you were pleading for your own soul, and desist not till your conscience bears you witness that God himself might say, ‘This is prayer.’ Then arise, and go forth, and when you meet any of your offending brethren apart from the rest of the world, tell them of their faults, but do it with tenderness ; speak as fallen man to fallen men. Desire no witnesses, seek for no applause, and be satisfied even to have no success, if the Almighty sees fit that you should have none. Remember always the sovereignty of God, and endeavor in all things to lose your will in his.

“Consider, too, that the errors you deplore, may not be of that heinous nature you suppose them to be, nay, if they are the occasion of mutually calling forth in us the kind affections, I doubt not but they may be made acceptable to the Deity. You see this ten-stringed gnasur that stands by my side ; it doubtless may be so played upon as to cause the harshest discord, but that same variety of tones when differently touched, may be also made to yield the sweetest harmony. So, haply, those various

differences among us which we all bewail, might, if they could be made to strike the concord of perfect charity, produce a melody, more grateful in the ear of heaven than that of the most perfect simple sound. I do not absolutely say that this is so, it may be but the wanderings of an old man's brain.

“ My children, I thank you for your respectful silence, and the patience with which you have listened to me. Let me see that you follow my counsel, as well as harken to it, and may the love of God and man so deeply pervade all our hearts, that we may seek nothing earnestly in this world but the glory of the one and the salvation of the other.”

The venerable Oreb, here quitted the support of his staff, to recline on the earth, with which, ere many revolving suns, his dust would probably be mingled. No one attempted to speak, a pensive spirit seemed to have seized the assembly, and the disputants walked slowly and thoughtfully away. At length, after an interval of silence, Mara the prophetess arose, and took a lute in her hand, which she struck with sweetness and solemnity. Immediately more than two hundred Israelitish maidens advanced to follow her with songs, and dances, and instruments of music.

Mara was a Carmelitess, a daughter of Eliad, of the tribe of Judah. She led the way towards the vineyards of Engedi, which were on the south-east side of the mountain. The movements of her still graceful form, the words of her song, the tones of her lute, now solemn, now plaintive, then nimbly changing to the inspiring notes of confidence and joy, were all alike unpremeditated, and the extemporaneous effusions of her pious and grateful mind. None presumed to follow her steps but the virginal host, who softly echoed the metre of her song, and

the measure of her music, while they followed and imitated the significant action of her varying dance. At first were heard the dirge, like sounds of penitence, accompanied with suitable movements of the body. They bewailed the rancor they had from time to time shown to their fellow-creatures by thought, or word, or deed. Then they changed to more importunate tones and gestures, while they besought their God to alter the spirit of their hearts; to take away the spirit of wickedness, and impart to them his own good spirit in its stead; so that variance might give place to unity, and contentions to peace.

To have beheld them at this period of their devotions, one would have imagined that this troop of maidens, attired in their garments of gladness, had been waiting before the unfolding portals of some eastern monarch, each eager to present their petitions, and to be heard above the rest in their moving supplications. Now they appeared as prostrating themselves before him, and with uplifted hands imploring his mercy. Then suddenly, as if the gracious signal had been given, and they had each obtained their request, they burst into an extatic chorus of praise, and bounded lightly in the graceful dance with the elastic foot of joy. Thus they went on praising and glorifying God in the vineyards of Engedi, till the divided rocks were made vocal by the echo of their song.

During the time that the young women were thus employed, the men went down to the smooth, firm sands, to run their races. This was an exercise that they had brought to great perfection, and many of their swiftest runners had obtained the name of some fleet-footed animal, whose action in flight they were supposed to resemble. The prize they contended for was a myrtle-crown, a simple distinction; but what distinction is there, how-

er simple, that will not call forth pride in the heart of man?

Caphtor was fully sensible of this truth, when the wreath was fixed on his brow. He tried to argue himself into humility, he considered the folly of being elated with such a frivolous superiority, but it was all in vain; he found he could gain no victory over himself, whatever he had done over others. He could not, by any effort, forget that he had obtained what hundreds had been striving for, or blot out the consciousness that the admiring eye of the whole congregation would soon be upon him.

The music of the dulcet choirs now undulated softly over the waves, to collect the scattered assembly for the evening sacrifice. He felt that he was not in that frame of mind that becomes a sinner, just going to do homage to his Creator, and lingering for a few moments behind his companions as they began to ascend the mountain, he plucked the bauble from his brow, and cast it into the sea.



## CHAPTER XXII.

AND here let us pause to ask if any of our readers begin to yawn at the idea of being again dragged forth to the vespers of Mount Carmel, and dread to think, that even when that ceremony is gone through, only two days

of the feast of tabernacles will be over, and that there are four more yet to come!

To such we would show our gratitude for their patience and perseverance, in having accompanied our heroine so far in her pilgrimage through life, by not only excusing them from attending the remaining days of this annual festival, but by permitting them to pass at once over twenty years of her fate; only entreating them still to show so much interest in it, as to cast on them the glance of retrospection.

Are there any, whom we thus address, whose own lives admit of their looking back on such a lengthened period of existence? It is not to them we need observe, that it will be a glance over a checkered scene; the unrolling of a web of many colors, whose tints get more sombre the further we unfold it; yet on those sombre tints the blessings of heaven is often found to rest, as the darkest colors are known to attract and to retain the sun's heat, while the light and gaudy hues, that flaunt and glitter in its rays, remain cold to the touch, and impervious to its vital beam.

To illustrate this remark, let us take Sephora from the sacred dances in the vineyards of Engedi, where we left her in her vestal raiment, her flowing hair anointed with the oil of gladness, her flexile form vivid with youth and health, and her enlivened soul animated by the yet almost unseparated hopes of nature and immortality. Let us take her from this festive scene and behold her in her garments of widowhood, her tresses shorn and ashes on her head, sitting low and sorrowfully on the ground by the couch of an only and beloved child, watching the hectic flush of disease in his dying and emaciated countenance.

Let us take Caphtor and transport him to brighter

shores. We have just seen him cast away the feverish wreath of human pride, leaving it to toss and perish on the restless deep. Let us behold him now receiving an immortal meed—a crown of incorruption—an ever fragrant and unwithering garland, that, unlike worldly honors, imbues and saturates his soul with deep humility. And as his spirit darts along the embowered and crystal streams of life, where angels tune their golden harps, and the unceasing voice of heavenly love is as the rushing sound of many waters; he still finds his highest and most sacred joy, to cast the trophy at his Saviour's feet, while he knows himself unworthy to sustain this radiant and eternal weight of glory.

By thus mentioning the fates of Caphtor and Sephora, it will be imagined that their destinies were united. The conclusion is just. They were espoused to each other before the feast of tabernacles came round again, and they were married soon afterwards. But by what avenue love entered their hearts, or when admitted there, how the passion was entertained, we have been unable to ascertain, and consequently are inadequate to communicate. Could the history of this era of their lives be known, perhaps it would not create any particular interest.

The Israelites all looked upon themselves as naturally born to marry, as to die. A single person, of either sex, could scarcely be found among their tribes. Marriage, therefore, among them was considered as much a fate as a choice. And it is possible the preliminaries that led to it were of a less intricate and soul-monopolizing nature, than those which we find so profusely and distinctly depicted in our western legends of love;—legends which turn fiction into truth, and themselves cause the misery they deplore, by promising more from life than it can have

to bestow. Yet it must be acknowledged that there is in some minds, wholly unvitiated by such productions, a sort of natural romance—a bright halo that fancy throws round futurity; and which, though suspected to be but a vapor, still gleams on the sight, till overclouded by the actual sorrows of life.

Caphtor and Sephora had both some tincture of this visionary spirit; yet perhaps they were as thoroughly persuaded, as youthful theorists ever are, that happiness is not to be found in this world; but they had not yet themselves proved its fallacy, and consequently had not that real conviction of this truth, that experience alone can give. They looked round on all they knew, and saw that with most the chalice of existence was but a sweetened bitter, or at best, but a bitter sweet. They did not dare to say that they hoped for an unmingled cup, yet they secretly thought the ingredients might be so tempered, as to disguise or exclude all the nauseating drops.

The tribe and family of Caphtor have already been mentioned. His father was the Rabbi Keroob, who was also one of the chief Shophetim of the city of Nain, and sat in the gates judging the people.

Keroob was a man of great pride and wealth, and followed the luxurious manners of a city life. Caphtor lived under his roof; and Sephora, when she was first introduced to the destined abodes of her future days, was surprised by an appearance of magnificence that she did not even know existed among them, much less had she ever imagined that she should be surrounded by such splendid vanities.

The floors and pillars of the lofty apartments were of marble, the wainscots of carved cedar, costly brasiers rested on golden tripods, and large and beautiful vases stood for water jars. The bedsteads were inlaid with

ivory ; rich carpets were spread for couches ; the bars of the lattices were of the finest brass, and the scarlet and purple tissues of Tyre, were drawn over them to exclude the meridian heats, and cast the artificial lights of the outgoing day. The house, though within the walls of the city, stood surrounded by a garden in which were profusely planted all the balsamic shrubs of the east. A clear rill of water meandered among the trees, and in its course fell into marble baths, or rose in stately fountains.

Keroob was well provided with all the luxurious pleasures of this world, and did not doubt but by his almsgiving, fastings, and prayers, he could establish a good claim to the joys of the next. He had certain exercises at set times, which he required his religion to perform ; and it is but justice to him to say, that he was very exact in never suffering his pleasures to encroach upon these, but then he thought it but fair that his religion should be equally forbearing and never presume to interfere with his pleasures ; and thus giving, as he thought, both worlds their due, he kept his goods in peace.

Keroob had never opposed Caphtor's union with Sephora, though he knew the comparative meanness of her condition. His great desire was to see him married, but he found that he and his son did not agree in their ideas of a wife. He had proposed a great many to him, whom he thought every thing that could be desired. But his projects for his son's happiness had so often been defeated, that when he heard he had at last found some one to please him, instead of objecting to his choice, he made a feast and called all his neighbors together to rejoice.

Very soon after Sephora's marriage, Pythonissa died. Her health, which seemed to experience such a renewal on her happy change from idolatry to the true religion,

soon again declined, and the revival was found to be of a very temporary nature. Her constitution had received such a shock from her midnight orgies of magic, and the conflicts her mind underwent at that time, as she never recovered; and in the daily enfeebling powers of a diseased and weary frame, she felt an awful and incessant monitor reminding her of the errors and sins of her past life. She stayed long among the vineyards of Mount Carmel, and had a tent erected within the shepherd's fold, that she might inhale the breath of sheep. But neither this, nor the freshness of the breezes, nor any other remedy her friends could devise, afforded her any effectual relief. She lingered on for more than a year, apparently much in the same state, but perfectly aware of her inward decay. Towards the last fortnight of her life she became rapidly worse. Her patience, her hope, and her humility, increased with her sufferings, until she calmly breathed her last in her daughter's arms.

Caphtor and Sephora remained on the banks of the Kishon during the days of mourning, and after those were accomplished, she prepared to leave for ever the abode of her fathers. It was to her a most solemn separation, hardly less so than the one she had lately experienced.

Keroob was most eager for the days of mourning to be ended, but he found some solace for his impatience in contriving various luxuries and splendors to surprise Sephora, who on her part was happily quite unconscious of the honors that awaited her. She knew before she married Caphtor, that his father was a man of great wealth, and not only rich in flocks and in herds, but also in silver, and in gold, and in raiment. Yet this circumstance was so far from having had any weight with her in her choice of him for her husband, that it scarcely made any

impression on her mind, for she was hardly aware of the ideal importance that was attached to wealth in the eyes of the world, and knew but little of those ostentatious vanities that sojourners in cities had adopted, so different from the simplicity of pastoral life.

Sephora with difficulty got leave to mourn for her mother seventy days, and the thirteenth of the month Adon was fixed on for her removal to Nain. She arose early in the morning to cast a farewell look on the scenes of her youth. They were all dear to her, but she paused with peculiar feelings in those haunts where the spirit of Patrobus still seemed to linger. She was yet bending over his favorite bed of flowers and looking at them through her tears, when Caphtor came to lead her away, and tell her the procession was approaching. She lifted up her eyes, and saw quite a troop winding along the eastern banks of the Kishon, and drawing near to her humble dwelling.

Keroob had arranged every thing for the departure. He despatched a band of singing men and singing women, and ten sons and daughters of the chief men of the city of Nain mounted on camels, to attend Caphtor and Sephora to their future home. The camels destined for them, were richly caparisoned with scarlet housings fringed with silver bells.

Sephora was already sad enough at leaving a parent's roof without a parent's blessing; and when she saw this nuptial pomp that awaited her, she felt still more reluctant to quit those simple scenes, that she had always found sufficient for her happiness. But she stifled her regret, endeavored to forget her father and her father's house, and resolved to follow her beloved husband with gratitude and joy wherever he should lead her, saying to him as Ruth said to Naomi, "whither thou goest I will

go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. The Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

SPLENDID as was the bridal procession, Sephora soon found it was but the beginning of honors. As she approached Nain another troop of maidens came out to meet her, crowned with garlands and carrying golden cups of incense. They held a long embroidered cord, which they fastened round her camel's neck and led her towards the city, each holding the cord in one hand, and the censer in the other, and alternately changing places, the one at the end of the cord going up to the head of the camel, and so continuing till they had each held this post of honor. When they had proceeded some way in this order, another bevy of damsels came forward with songs and dances, bearing baskets made of palm leaves and filled with flowering myrtle, which they strewed before her path, hoping that her way through life would be fragrant and thornless as the blossoms beneath her feet. The distances had been so accurately measured, and the dances so well rehearsed, that the conclusion of the ceremony brought them to the gateway that had been erected for this occasion, through which, she and her husband

and the company invited to their nuptial feast, were to pass.

The gateway within was dark and narrow, but the garden beyond was splendidly illuminated by the glowing tints of the western sun. As the guests went through, they had wedding garments thrown over them which were provided by Keroob.

Connected with the house of Keroob was a large open quadrangular court, into which the guests as they arrived were ushered, which was inclosed by a curtain supported by cords reaching from one parapet wall to the other. Caphtor and Sephora were not taken into this court, they were introduced immediately into the banqueting room which stood quite apart from the rest of the mansion, amidst the thickest shades of the garden. It was formed of lattice work entwined with Arabian jessamine and honeysuckles that were planted round it. Odorous spices were burning in the room and brilliant lamps were suspended from its canopied dome. On one side were arranged costly water jars for purification, and on another ewers of wine that had been cooled in icy caverns. The triclinium of curious frame work, and spread over with carpets, was arranged round three sides of the apartment, and tables set before it covered over with dainty fruits and substantial viands. In a corner of this apartment, which was in that country the post of honor, sat Keroob, attended by the governor of the feast, waiting their arrival. He was dressed with the utmost magnificence; his hair was spread over his shoulders, fragrant with aromatic oils, and glittering with gold dust, that was thickly sprinkled over it; \* his ear-rings were of emeralds; his tunic of Tyrian purple; his palliam of byssus, variously tinted; his sandals were clasped with precious

\* See Note II. at the end.

stones, and innumerable chains, rings, and signets, encircled and almost stiffened his neck, arms, and fingers. When his son and daughter entered the room, he arose to salute them, laying his right hand on his bosom and making a gentle inclination of his body, while they prostrated themselves at his feet. He immediately raised them from this humble attitude, and taking off his own robe of many colors threw it round Caphtor, and at the same time removing bracelets of half a shekel's weight, which were suspended round his arms, he placed them on Sephora's. They felt to her more like manacles than ornaments, but she endeavored to receive them graciously. He then led her to the seat he had before occupied himself; and, girding his tunic, approached her with a laver of jasper, and unloosed her sandals to wash her feet. This was an office usually performed by a slave, but to do her peculiar honor, he chose to take it on himself. He then took the nuptial crown, and placing it on her head, said, "Sephora, I receive thee for my daughter, for all the gate of my people know that thou art virtuous. Thou hast never left the guide of thy youth, nor departed from the commandment of thy God." \*

The governor of the feast paid the same compliments to Caphtor, that Keroob did to Sephora, and after the crown was placed on his head, the father pronounced a nuptial benediction on them both. He then despatched the servants to the guests, to tell them that all things were ready, and bid them to the supper. The guests lost no time in obeying the summons, and as they entered, they each saluted the new married pair, laid some offering at their feet, and passed on to the supper-table, round which they seated or rather reclined themselves, leaning on the left arm, according to the manner of the east.

\* Canticles iii. 11.

After a given time the doors of the banqueting-room were closed, and were not to be opened again, even though an invited guest should demand admittance. At the same time a signal was given for the outer portals to be thrown open, and the populace were allowed to enter the gardens, to behold, through the lattice work, those splendid festivities they were precluded from partaking.

As soon as the doors were closed, so that no more guests could enter, Keroob led Caphtor and Sephora to their seats, while the governor cautiously looked over the company to see that they were all placed according to their rank and birth-right. Some he led up higher, who had modestly left the chief seats for those that were more honorable than they. And others he humbled, who had thrust themselves into places of distinction they had no right to fill.

When they were all properly arranged, he broke the bread and distributed a piece to every one, pronouncing this Zemiroth, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that produceth bread out of the earth." He then opened a large jar of wine, that had been buried in the earth at Caphtor's birth, and pouring some into each one's cup till it overflowed, said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hast created the fruit of the vine."

A servant next went round with a silver ewer, and poured water on every one's hands, and then anointed their heads with fragrant oils. After which the banqueting began, and was kept up till near midnight; and even then the guests seemed not to think of retiring, till Keroob took a crystal cup, worth four hundred zuzees, and broke it before them, which they took as the signal that mirth was to cease, and immediately arose to depart.

Festivities were renewed again the next morning; or,

to speak more properly, according to the customs of those we are treating of, we should say the same morning, for the Jews, and most of the eastern nations, place the night before the day. The morning amusements consisted chiefly of games, such as shooting with a bow, slinging pebbles at a mark, lifting a burdensome stone and trying who could carry it farthest, foot races, and other feats of skill, activity, or strength.

The games were carried on in the wilderness of Nain. This wilderness was not a barren dreary spot, but a portion of unappropriated land, such as lay contiguous to many of the Israelitish cities.

The stately revelry of this marriage feast was kept up without intermission for seven successive days. Even the Sabbath was scarcely a respite from them; for they went in such state to the synagogue, that it was more like going to be worshiped than as worshipers.

Sephora most sincerely rejoiced when these pegeantries were all over, for she had never known a time of such unmitigated weariness. In periods of the severest afflictions she had felt some seasons of refreshment—moments when gleams of heaven broke through the sorrows of her soul, and made her feel that they might not only be endured, but enjoyed. In those festive scenes she had been used to, where nature herself seemed to spread the banquet, and liberally invite all her votaries to partake, she had often found the pulse of joy beat with a quicker throb. But in all this premeditated pomp there was an inanity and vapidness, which even the presence of her husband could not dissipate.

Caphtor had promised her, that when these irksome ceremonies were over, he would take her to their house in the recesses of Mount Hermon, where he and his father often resided during the summer months; and on

the afternoon of the eighth day they made themselves ready to depart. Keroob wanted to send them in state, but Sephora begged to be spared; and after much entreaty, she was allowed to walk with Caphtor, without having the whole city to attend them. She was much amused as she passed through the market-place of Nain, where the children usually assembled to play, in observing one personating herself, most profusely decked with wild-flowers, led along by a joyous group, who required no artifice to animate their mirth. A great concourse followed, piping on reeds and dancing, and conducting another in the same state, whom they called Caphtor.

On the opposite side of the market-place, a rival cluster of children were representing the burial of the Rabbi Zibbor, which had lately been celebrated. Six boys had crossed their arms, and were carrying another who lay extended along them, with his face and hands bound over with napkins. A long procession followed, who were indulging their natural love of noise by most vociferous lamentations.

These processions were vying with each other, to see which could obtain the greatest number of followers, and were each addressing themselves to those children who had not yet engaged in play, trying to persuade them to join their party. But there was a large group that continued deaf to the voice of entreaty, and sullenly refused either to join the mourners or the merry-makers.

Sephora looked with curiosity at the streets of the city as she passed through them; it was all a new sight to her, but though many of the buildings were magnificent, she thought a city a gloomy looking place, and was glad when she had passed its walls and gates, and could breathe the freer air of the mountain.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

MOUNT Hermon was more irregular in its shape than either Tabor or Carmel; and instead of being detached like them, it formed a part of a chain of mountains that almost reached Scythopolis.

The country dwelling of Keroob presented in its simplicity a happy contrast to his city mansion. Here Caph-tor and Sephora would gladly have passed their lives; but Keroob had made them promise to return to him in nine days. They both thought these days passed from them with the swiftness of an eagle's wing; they both, however, thought that something, and much ought to be cheerfully sacrificed, when it was to contribute to a parent's comfort, and neither of them proposed staying a moment beyond the appointed time.

To avoid the heat of the day, and obey Keroob's injunction of being with him before noon, they rose very early the morning they were to go, and had already commenced their walk when the sun was but beginning to gild the summits of the hills that surrounded their happy dwelling. They took a different and even a more beautiful path than that by which they ascended the mountain, and were sorry to find themselves at the gates of the city almost before they were aware of it.

As they passed through the market-place, Sephora looked again for the children; but it was now occupied by a different throng, and all the business of the city was

being transacted there. Booths were thickly erected all round it, and merchandise and traffic carrying on within them, while the central space was filled with laborers who were standing to be hired, and masters who were engaging them. They stopped for a few minutes to behold the busy scene. All things connected with a city were so new to Sephora that they obtained her regard; but the more she saw the more she wondered how men could ever be brought to live in them, when they were free to enjoy the blessings of a country life.

Keroob had been so particular in requiring their presence at an early hour that morning, that she almost feared he had been contriving some new way of burdening time, and that other pompous bridal ceremonies still awaited them. But as soon as she saw him these fears quite vanished from her mind, and were succeeded by others of a very different nature. His garments of gladness and all his ornaments were laid aside, and he was wrapped in a coarse mourning robe of sackcloth. His head was no longer anointed with perfumes, but strewed with dust and ashes. His face, which during the feast wore a perpetual smile, was now disfigured by sorrow, and his whole appearance seemed immediately to proclaim that some irremediable misfortune had overtaken him.

There are particular qualities by which certain bodies are irresistibly propelled towards each other. Affliction had this magnetic power over the mind of Sephora. She instantly advanced towards him, and with looks of the tenderest and most open-hearted compassion, inquired the cause of his distress.

He told her he was fasting. That notwithstanding his having all the good things of this world at command, he was not one of those irreligious people who forget their

duty to God or man, and though he was thankful to say he had no sins of his own to repent of, yet he thought it right to fast sometimes by way of example to his dependents, and to let the people see that he did not neglect such things.

He then desired Sephora to open a chest that stood in the room, and give him out the rolls of money that were there. She did as she was required, and he put them into his girdle and walked out of the room; telling her that if she pleased she might follow him, for he made no doubt, from all that he had heard of her, but that she would like to see the poor relieved, and hear the blessing of him who was ready to perish.

Sephora accepted the invitation, and followed him down the avenue, till he reached the gates that opened into Nain. Here a servant was stationed, who no sooner saw his master's approach, than he ran up into a small tower that was erected over the porch; and, standing on its battlements, blew a trumpet with a shrill and lengthened sound. The signal was well understood in the city, and Keroob was soon surrounded by a multitude of poor people, who were most vociferous in their praises and blessings. He lengthened his countenance as he dealt out his bounty to them, that they might have the twofold advantage of witnessing his religion, and experiencing his good works.

He relieved the greater part of the supplicants, but clamor seemed with him to be the peculiar test of merit; and those who were loudest in his praises partook the most freely of his liberality.

This work engaged him for some time, and he returned to his house in such complacency with himself, that he took no offence at Sephora's silence; he was even pleased by it, as he did not doubt but she was meditating

on what she had seen, and that she was most deeply impressed by his munificence and charity.

Sephora herself did not find it so easy to decipher the emotions of her mind, as Keroob had done for her. His religion was so different to any thing she had ever seen before, that it perfectly astonished her. She wished not to condemn him; yet, when she saw the studied austerity of his garb and countenance, the publicity of his beneficence, and the complacency with which he listened to the most fulsome flattery, she involuntarily thought of Patrobus, and of the simplicity of his love to God and man.

The more Keroob thought his daughter was surprised by his greatness or goodness, the more anxious he was to awaken in her further wonder, by giving her fresh tokens of his magnificence, power, and devotion.

She was just going, in the afternoon, to bathe herself in the fountain in the inner myrtle grove, when he sent one of the maids, who were following her with oils and wash-balls, to call her back, and tell he was just proceeding to sit in judgment at the gate, and he wished her to go with him, as it would be a new scene to her, and likely to amuse her. She complied with his request, though she would rather not have gone, for she knew that the hour of evening prayer would arrive before she could return, and she always wished to pass that time in retirement. But she thought there would be something ostentatious in giving this as a motive for her refusal. She was not quite sure either, whether there might not be something of hypocrisy in it, as well as ostentation; for, on her return from the bath, she had been thinking of sitting with Caphtor, and weaving a basket for him, while he looked over and repaired the arms that had been damaged by the games in the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXV.

THE market-place was still busily occupied by the merchants and traders of Nain, and a few of the laborers yet stood unhired on their station, when Sephora and Keroob reached it, in their way to the judgment gate. The crowd was so thick on that side they were to pass, that she expressed her fears to him lest they should not be able to get through it. He answered her only by an exulting smile, and before he had time to speak she heard his name repeated on all sides, and saw the throng yield on the right hand and on the left, and a clear road made for him to go through. But though the path was opened, their speed in getting through it was not much accelerated, for he received such numerous and obsequious tokens of respect, that their steps were every moment retarded. But few presumed to salute him as an equal, by laying their hand on their bosom and inclining towards him. The greater part of the multitude acknowledged him as their superior by bowing down before him and kissing his feet or the hem of his garment; and so many paid this compliment, that the sun sensibly declined towards the west while he was making his way through the greetings of the market-place. When he arrived at the gate, the elders rose up before him and remained standing till he had taken his seat. The crowd here was almost as great as that they had lately passed through, for there were several causes to be decided; and almost every one, whose business led them in or out

of the city, waited to hear what judgments would be given.

The party that claimed the right of being first heard, as having been the longest in waiting, were a man and his wife, who were weary of each other.

As soon as Keroob was seated, the man advanced and put into his hand the *gheth*, or bill of divorcement, written on vellum. He looked at it, and then asked him whether he was voluntarily inclined to do what he had done. He replied he was; on which Keroob desired the woman to open her hands, in order to receive the deed lest it should fall to the ground. She did so; and he then made a similar inquiry of her, and received the like answer. She delivered the *gheth* again into his hands, and he read it aloud before all the people, and declared that they were free.

When this affair was decided, a Hebrew servant, whose six years of servitude were expired, came to declare before the judges, that he loved his master, and his wife, and his children; and that he would not accept his freedom and go forth from them, but would serve his master for ever.

A delinquent was next brought forward, who was accused of having removed the landmark of the Fatherless. But this accusation could not be substantiated.

A penitent thief then advanced, who confessed to having stolen an ox, and he brought five oxen to make restitution.

A man was next conducted into the presence of the judges, who was a transgressor of the law. He had seen the ass of him that hated him, sink under its burden, and had refused to help him. This was a crime whose punishment was not exactly defined, but was left to the dis-

cretion of the judges. As the offender was a Nethinim they only fined him a drachm of silver.

What was considered as the grand business of the day was the last that came under consideration. It was the purchase of the possession of a field, and the rocks and caves adjoining it, that belonged to Zibo the Nainite. The purchaser was Lebbeus, who was also the next inheritor. The possession lay along the southern confines of Mount Hermon; the price of it was ten shekels of silver and two ounces of gold. It was weighed in the balances at the gate, and delivered to Zibo in the sight of all the people. A covenant in writing, sealed, stamped with the signet of Keroob, and inclosed in an earthen jar, was then given to Lebbeus as an evidence of the purchase; and the people were called upon by the judges to witness the transaction, who all lifted up their voices and answered, "we are witnesses."

The bargain was thus made sure, and the court about to dissolve, when a widow, followed by ten children, came forward and threw herself before the feet of Keroob, entreating his clemency, and beseeching him to wait for the debt that her husband had owed him, till her sons and daughters should grow up and be able to repay him; for their only wealth was their little patrimony, and their only dependance the exertions of her eldest child, who toiled hard from the rising to the setting sun to procure them a scanty maintenance. Keroob told her that he was just rising from the gate, but he would hear her request at his own house. He spoke in such a gentle voice of compassion, that it was almost equivalent to a promise of mercy. The widow's heart seemed gladdened by it. And Sephora, who had seen his profuse liberality in the morning, never doubted but he was full of kind intentions towards this real object of charity. Yet,

some months afterwards, she had accidentally the sorrow to find, that the father of Caphtor had not only taken away from the widow her little inheritance, but had also sold her son, the staff of her age, for thirty pieces of silver, the common price of a slave. But as this did not near pay the debt, he made a merit of not selling the rest of the family, and suffering the widow and her fatherless children to seek their bread, through a desolate and ensnaring world.

The assembly now broke up. Keroob and Sephora took their way towards home. They had not gone far before she suddenly missed him from her side; and, turning round to see what was become of him, beheld him on his knees, at the corner of the street. The sun was setting; it was the hour of evening sacrifice.

The widow also, whose heaving heart was overcharged with grief, hope, and gratitude, fell down to spread her sorrows before God, and seemed altogether unconscious or regardless of the presence of her fellow-creatures.

Sephora revered her feelings, and condemned herself, that she should feel ashamed to follow her example; but she found it impossible to assume the posture of devotion in such a place. Yet as she waited for her father and his suppliant, and drew her wimple in thicker folds over her face, she felt that prayer had no essential attitude.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

ON the fifth of the month Abib, Caphtor and Sephora, and their attendants, left Nain for Jerusalem, to be present at the feast of the passover. They took with them a tent and provisions for the journey, and utensils to dress them in; for the inns of the east are often nothing more than an inclosure for cattle, or at the best, afford only bare walls for the accommodation of passengers, with sometimes a solitary attendant, who subsists chiefly by the charity of those who sojourn there. They proceeded in the direction of the mountains of Gilboa, and halted the first night in the valley of Jezreel. They intended to pitch their tent by the fountain, as they knew that caves abounded there, which might accommodate their servants and their camels. On approaching this spot, however, they heard the loud voice of meriment; and, on coming up to it, found it already completely occupied. Ten folds of sheep, with shepherds presiding over each, encompassed the fountain; and every shaded spot the neighborhood afforded, was already encamped over by Arvah of Gilboa, who had been holding his sheëp-shearing in this valley for the last three days.

Arvah, who himself presided as chief shepherd of his flocks, was at this time engaged in calling his sheep one by one out of the fold. They each knew their name, and obeyed his voice. He had just delivered Naioth his favorite sheep, to the shearers to be shorn, and was turning round to call another, when he beheld the travellers

approach. He immediately quitted his employment, and ran forward to meet them and claim them for his guests. 'My friend,' said he, taking the bridle of each of their camels in his hand, and addressing himself to Caphtor, "thou art a stranger, and since I have espied thee on the way, never refuse me the favor which I require of thee. Come, wash thy feet, and eat of my bread, and abide under the shadow of my tent, and tarry here with thy wife till the days of the feast are past, and then pursue thy journey, and the Lord be thy safeguard by night and by day." They accepted his courteous hospitality for that night; and, dismounting from their camels, walked with them to his shearing-house. It was a cavern in the rock, that looked far down the broad and wooded valley of Jezreel, till the view was terminated by the mountains of Gilboa, whose scorched and barren heads seemed to have felt the power of David's curse.

The business of the day was now quickly over, and the festivities of it succeeded and were kept up to a late hour; but the travellers got leave to retire from them, that they might be ready for an early departure on the morrow. Their first stage was to Ginea, the frontier town of Samaria. It was situated towards the base of the western declivity of a hill, that bounded the utmost extent of the plain of Esdraelon, which here waved with corn; and as the wind swept over it, looked like a sea of plenty. They did not enter the town, but reposed themselves under the shade of mulberry trees till the intense meridian heats were passed, and then journeyed on to Samaria, through a fertile country, down a valley of about two miles in width and five in length.

As they passed through the valley they overtook a large company, who were, like themselves, going to Jerusalem, and being importuned to join them, out of courtesy they complied.

It was usual then, and still is, in the east, to travel en-masse, both for the sake of protection and society. But Caphtor and Sephora preferred a quieter path, and had left their city a day before the troop from thence set out, to avoid the bustle of a multitude. They felt no fear, for God was their protector; they wished for no company, for themselves were society.

Samaria was situated upon a long mount of an oval form, having first a fruitful dale and then a ring of hills running round it. On the left hand of this dale, as you descend towards Jerusalem, stood a receptacle for travelers. It was a square cloistered building, erected round an open court, that served as an inclosure for cattle. Olive, and cedar trees shaded its massy walls; and a clear spring, that gushed from the side of a neighboring hill, was conducted into a large cistern that stood in the middle of the court, and brought a constant supply of pure fresh water. This inn was raised by the Samaritans for the accommodation of the Jews, and stood as a monument of their kindness towards a people who despised them.

Near the cloistered building, and almost as if growing out of the hill, stood an humble dwelling, where abode a shepherd and his family, who were ready to deal out refreshments to the weary. They had heard at a distance the confused din of many voices, and the trampling of hoofs, and when the pilgrims began to descend the winding path that conducted them to this asylum in the dale, the whole household were busily employed in preparing for their reception.

Two women were sitting opposite to each other before the door of the shepherd's hut, grinding corn between two large mill-stones, and, as they turned the upper one round, beguiled the labor by singing one of those simple

melodies which nature herself seems almost to inspire, to sweeten the rough toil of some of the lowliest of her children.

At a little distance from these women, in a cool recess in the rock, a boy and girl were churning butter. Three poles were fixed in the earth at some distance from each other, with their tops drawn together in the form of a cone. A goat-skin filled with milk was suspended to them, and the children were pulling it backwards and forwards with great swiftness and alacrity.

Notability reigned within the tent as well as without its threshold. The shepherd was entering it with two kids, which had been newly slain; while his wife was already busily employed in kneading thin cakes and baking them in a tajan, or shallow earthen vessel, that was placed upon blazing thorns.

The bustle of the dale was soon increased by the travellers preparing to take up their abode in it for the night. Some unpacked their stores and erected their tents; some spread their couches in the cloistered building, and others were actively employed in unlading their mules and camels, and giving them rest and provender. But when this first confusion of arrangement was over, they were all glad to sit down to the fare the shepherd had provided for them; and cheerfully requited him for his kindness, both with money and thanks.

On the morrow, at that uncertain hour that belongs neither to night nor day, they resumed their journey. They wound through the dale of Samaria without entering its gates, and passing between the hills that inclosed it, entered the road that leads towards Jerusalem. They went through some villages which the light scarcely allowed them to discern; and, about the time of the morning watch, entered the narrow valley of Sychem, so

thickly set with monuments of ancient date. A direction post, marked REFUGE, stood at its entrance, that the unfortunate might never be at a loss which way to fly from the rage of the persecutor. It lay east and west, and was watered by a fine rivulet. They pursued their way through its fragrant and refreshing dews, and journeyed on for about an hour, till they arrived at the town of Sychem, which was situated about the middle of the valley, on the south side, and was built close under Mount Gerizem, which hung over it and screened it from the heats. It was on the brow of this mountain that Joshua gave his last solemn charge to the Israelites, who were convened in the valley below, and the stone was yet standing which witnessed their promise never to forget their God.

Mount Ebal stood immediately opposite to Mount Gerizem, and formed the other barrier of the valley, which, in this place, was not more than a furlong broad.

The pilgrims kept on their way without entering the town, and travelled along a narrow path that lay parallel to it, under Mount Ebal.

A reverential silence prevailed through the host as they passed with slow and pondering steps by the rocky sepulchre of Machpelah. Some took off their sandals from their feet, and others stopped to weep and cherish meditation. Here the bones of their three great patriarchs lay entombed; and here the body of Joseph found repose, beneath the sods of that valley that fed his father's flocks, when sent to his iniquitous brethren with that anxious parental inquiry, that formed the hinge of all his future fate; and not of his fate only, but of the very being and existence of their nation.

As some were pausing by the cave of Machpelah, and others were thoughtfully pursuing their way, a company

of Ishmaelites, bound from Gilead to Egypt, were seen passing along the valley with their camels, bearing spice-ry, and balm, and myrrh. It was a casual circumstance, but it spoke powerfully to their feelings, and seemed to embody their meditations on the past.

The travelers took up their station at the end of the valley of Sychem, near Jacob's well. Some of them returned into the city to buy provisions; but the greater part were contented to remain where they were, and coveted nothing so much as shade and rest. The heats of the sun were so particularly intense this day, that they were unwilling to remove from their encampment for many hours; and the daughters of the city had passed them with their pitchers on their shoulders, and returned again with the deep waters of the patriarch's well, before they struck their tents and prepared for departure.

Their road at first led across a fertile plain that Israel took from the Amorite, with his sword and with his bow, and which he bequeathed to his favorite son as a dying mark of distinction and preference. This plain was in some places scorched by the heats, but even there it was thickly enameled with flowers; for the same fervid ray that had withered the herbage had expanded some of the gaudiest blossoms of Palestine; so that this parcel of ground looked like the counterpart of the coat of many colors.

They afterwards traveled through other vales and meads, till the road became more rocky, and led round the stony ledge of shelving precipices. They passed the ancient Lebonah, and saw at a distance the mountain of Dothan, which was once made visible to mortal eyes, clothed with horses and chariots of fire.

After traveling cautiously for some hours, by steep and craggy paths, they entered towards midnight a very

narrow valley between two rocky hills, at the further end of which stood Bethel. Here it was that angels descended to visit the patriarch's flinty couch, and made him feel that those desolate rocks were dreadful as the house of God, and glorious as the very gates of heaven.

After passing Bethel they entered a thick coppice of almond and hazel. The profusion of these trees, that grew formerly about this place, gave to it its original name of Luz. Here they rested for a few hours, by the side of a winding stream, and then proceeded on their journey with renewed alacrity.

The limestone rocks and stony vallies of Judea were entirely covered with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees; not a single spot seemed to be neglected. The hills, from their bases to their summits, were overspread with gardens. All of these were free from weeds, and in the highest state of cultivation. Even the sides of the most barren mountains had been rendered fertile by being divided into terraces, like steps rising one above the other, upon which soil had been accumulated with astonishing labor. It presented altogether one of the most striking pictures that can well be conceived, of the magnificent works of God, uniting with the patient industry of man.

The company had once thought of proceeding to Jerusalem without stopping; but when the heat of the day came on, it checked their impatience, and the shadow of a high rock falling across a mossy dell, they turned aside to rest under its covert.

All the remainder of the road continued to exhibit the same and even greater tokens of cultivation, for though the hills appeared of a more churlish nature, and showed fewer marks of spontaneous fruitfulness, yet they were so cherished by the indefatigable hand of labor, and so

fostered by the dews and showers of heaven, that they presented a second Eden to the view, and the ground seemed no longer cursed, but blessed, for man's sake.

After travelling for about three hours through this diversified garden, which had it been intended merely for the gratification of the eye, nothing could have been imagined more beautiful or more rare; they ascended a hill towards the south, from the summit of which the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by its threefold wall and lofty towers, burst on their view.

It was built on two hills of unequal height, which were separated from each other by the Tyropean vale, that reached to the fountain of Siloa. The deep valley of Jeoshaphat, with the brook Cedron running through it, encompassed the city; beyond which rose lofty hills that enclosed it on every side. Some were covered with olive trees, others with gardens and sepulchres. The latter presented a face of naked rock, and added great interest to the view, both from the awful sensations they excited, and the contrast of their barrenness rising out of the bosom of cultivation.

As they entered the way leading to the gate of Damascus, the sun was shedding its last rays of light over the scene, and all the loftiest and proudest monuments of Jerusalem gleamed on their sight, and stood conspicuous before them. Its triple wall; its ninety fortresses; its massy gates; its towers of Phaselas, Psephina, and Mariamne; the Castle of Antonia; the palace of their kings; and the Temple of their God. All these shone with indescribable magnificence, and seemed pointed out to observation as by a ray from heaven. The whole company felt the majesty of the scene and made an involuntary pause. The sun gradually descended behind Mount Gihon, and the evening lights of saffron, crimson, and

violet were shed over the hills ; soft and beautiful beyond any thing that can be imagined. The finest mellow glow rested on the darkly shaded village of Gethsemane, and tinged the wreathing smoke that slowly rose from the polluted vale of Hinnom.

Caphtor and Sephora were so long entranced by this scene, that when they prepared to descend into the city, they found themselves almost alone.

Keroob had furnished them with a commendatory epistle to Laadon, a relation, who lived near the lower pool, not far from the valley gate. Here they went, and found a welcome hospitality during all the time of their stay in Jerusalem. They had much of the town to traverse, on their way to their friend's house. They passed the Castle of Antiochus, the Roman theatre, the house of Antipas, the synagogue of Jaffa, and the school of Gamaliel. The door of this latter edifice was standing open, and they were tempted to enter it. They found the master haranguing on the beauties of the prophets. He was sitting at the upper end of an oval amphitheatre, and the students were ranged at his feet, according to their respective merits. The youth who was placed at his right did not appear to be more than fourteen years of age ; but though so much younger than many of the others, yet from the animation that beamed in his countenance, and the gentle nobleness that characterized its expression, it might well be imagined that this seat of honor was no unmerited distinction. His whole attitude indicated the deepest attention. He was half risen from his clinium, resting on his left hand, his luminous eye fixed on Gamaliel, imbibing and reflecting all the finest touches of his eloquence. Sometimes he interrupted his master with questions, and his very doubts discovered a clearness of intellect and depth of thought, that were truly admirable.

He seemed to possess one of those rare minds on which obscurity and ignorance could find no repose, and which nothing but knowledge and truth could appease and satisfy. It was easy to observe that Gamaliel was sensible of all his merit. In the finest parts of his discourse he instinctively looked towards his pupil, and his genius seemed to kindle with the glance.

Sephora and Caphtor had merely intended to look for a moment at the school; but they were so fascinated by witnessing this speaking and listening eloquence, that they could scarcely tear themselves from it and pursue their way to Laadon's house.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE interior of Jerusalem, though it possessed so many magnificent buildings, yet had but a sombre appearance to one whose eye was accustomed to range unconfined over the fairest objects in nature.

The streets were narrow and the houses high. The upper stories were latticed, but the lower ones had no windows looking to the town, and it was like passing between blank walls. For this reason most people preferred walking along the tops of the houses, which were flat-roofed and communicated with each other.

Just as they entered their friend's door, they found him going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, and in-

stead of entering the house, they dismounted from their camels and went with him.

Sephora could not, for the first time in her life, approach this consecrated building without feelings of awe, that thrilled through her very soul.

The temple stood in the midst of a large marble court, at an elevation of about four hundred cubits above the adjacent valley. It was built on a very hard rock, and the foundations were laid within it, at an incredible expense. The great gate was seventy cubits high and twenty-eight broad. The stones which formed it were unspeakably beautiful, and of a most astonishing magnitude. Instead of doors, the gate was clothed with vails, flowered with gold, silver, purple, and every thing rich and curious.

The court, in which the Temple stood, was divided into three parts by buildings of great magnificence. Its utmost extremity was encompassed with triple galleries of white marble. This was called the court of the Gentiles, but it looked more like a place of traffic than of prayer. The money-changers were sitting before their tables, negotiating their coin for gold or silver; oxen, lambs, and doves, were being clamorously offered for sale, and recommended for sacrifice. Some were buying, some were selling, others were, sauntering about without any determinate object, while some few of the devout Gentiles and unclean Jews were offering up their prayers, and looking towards that Temple which it was not lawful for them to approach.

The second court, which none but Israelites might enter under pain of death, was separated from the first by balustrades and stately columns. The third, which encircled the Temple and the altar of the burnt-offering, and was accounted still more sacred, was divided from

the second by a terrace of white marble, twelve feet wide at the top and considerably more at the base. Within this third inclosure was the court of the priests. It was separated from that of the people by a low wall. Here they stood arrayed in their linen vestments around the unextinguishable fire of the altar. The sacrifice was just consumed, and the time of incense past.

Those who went up to the Temple to worship, entered by the eastern gate, which was distinguished by the name of Beautiful. It was all overlaid with Corinthian brass, most exquisitely wrought.

Near this gate were laid many loathsome spectacles of human misery; the maimed, the infirm, the blind. But God seeth not as man seeth; for "man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart;" and, even under the Levitical dispensation, these wretched beings were thought as worthy to approach his courts, as those whose clothing was of purple, and whose beauty took the mind prisoner.

At the further end of the porch stood the two brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz, stability and strength. They were beautifully entwined with vine leaves and pomegranates of solid gold. But who shall describe the blaze of riches that presented itself to the view, on entering within the vail that concealed the interior of the Temple? The floor, sides and ceiling were entirely of cedar, covered over in every part by thick plates of gold. Across the upper end of the sanctuary, was the vail that concealed the Holiest of Holies. It was so admirably wrought with divers gems and colors, that the eye almost turned away from its splendor. Immediately facing the porch, and in front of the vail, stood the altar of incense; and on each side leading up to it, treasures of various kinds were displayed to the view. Sconces, and tables

of gold, Gazophylacia filled with coin, and rich garments and other precious things. Ewers, and cups, and plates, and censors of gold and silver.

The incense that had lately been burnt on the altar, still filled the Temple with its precious odor. The Levites were singing in soft, solemn, and responsive measures; while a thousand instruments of music, touched with the utmost skill and harmony, filled up the pauses of their voice. The effect of the whole scene was awful and impressive beyond any thing that can be conceived; and the mind almost fainted, even beneath this feeble image of the dread grandeur, the all-pervading mercy, and the ceaseless harmony of heaven. When this portion of the service of the Temple was over, a solemn pause ensued, and no sound was heard within or without the sacred courts. This consecrated silence continued for some time, till at length it was interrupted by the distant blowing of trumpets from the hights around Jerusalem. This was quickly echoed from one to the other, and became louder and louder, till it was answered by the silver trumpets of the sanctuary.

It was the proclamation of the new moon. Levites had been stationed on the hills to give the first signal of its discovery, and notice of this was no sooner received at the Temple, than the golden doors, that communicated with the apartments of its ministers, slowly opened to the sound of music; and, the high priest dressed in his pontifical robes, attended by his Sagan on his right hand, and his interpreter on his left, entered the sanctuary and took his station before the altar. He had on his forehead a triple crown, engraved with the ineffable name of Jehovah. Over his white tunic he wore the mehil, a round garment of hyacinthine hue, bordered with a deep fringe of golden bells and pomegranates, and girded with a

zone of curious workmanship. Above this was the ephod, a short vesture of five colors; gold, purple, scarlet, silk, and violet. It was fastened on the shoulders by two most precious sardonyx stones, bearing the names of the sons of Jacob engraven on them, in either stone six. The elder of them were placed on the right shoulder and the younger on the left. Round his neck was chained the sacred breastplate, engraved with the names of all the tribes. It was composed of twelve rare gems; jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, crysophras, jacinth, and amethyst. These, with commixing beams, darted their dazzling radiance on the sight, and gratefully reminded the children of Israel, that their God bore them still on his heart.

When the high priest reached the golden altar, he solemnly elevated his right hand and pronounced the eternal benediction: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." His arm thrice rose and fell as he pronounced this triple blessing. When he had concluded his benediction, he took the book of the law written in pure Hebrew, and unrolling it till he came to that part describing the Exodus from Egypt, he read a sentence in a low voice to his interpreter, who immediately proclaimed it aloud in the mixed dialect commonly spoken; and in this way they continued instructing the people for some time; the one reading, the other interpreting. Song and prayer then succeeded, when he again blessed the congregation, and they departed from the Temple.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE following morning was the tenth of the month. The city bleated like the plain, for all the unblemished lambs of the flocks were driven into it, and received into the courts of the houses in preparation for the passover. It was usual to keep them there that they might remain constantly in sight of the family, to remind them of the solemn festival they were so soon to commemorate. The pascal lamb, which was to be slain in Laadon's house, was tied to the handle of one of the large water-jars, standing in the room, where the supper was to be celebrated. The animal, used to be fostered by man, and ignorant of its approaching fate, betrayed no uneasiness at the situation assigned it; but after remaining contentedly there for some hours, suddenly showed the most evident tokens of alarm and distress. Its piteous bleatings and supplicatory looks were noticed by the family; who, fearing it was ill, and if so, not fit to be offered as a sacrifice, sent it to the shepherd to be changed for another. Another came and succeeded to the post the first had occupied. This also soon began to show equal marks of terror. A careful investigation of the room then took place, and near that part where the water-jars stood, a serpent's head was discovered forcing its way through an aperture in the wainscot. Laadon drew his sword and attempted to strike it off, but the reptile withdrew into its retreat and vanished from sight. Laadon, however, did not like such an inmate, and immediately sent

for Artemas the charmer, who lived in the suburbs of the city, near the potter's field. Artemas quickly appeared with a basket and bag in one hand, and a dulcimer in the other; and said, if it was not the deaf adder, he should soon be able to draw the reptile from its lurking-place. Some of the party were going to withdraw before he began his operations, but he begged them to remain and witness the wonderful power of harmony over these creatures. Curiosity prevailed over fear, and they complied with his request. He first enjoined the most perfect silence, and then taking his dulcimer, began to play a soft and wild kind of melody, accompanying it with his voice. He had not done this long before the serpent was seen to dart its head out of the crevice; and after remaining for a few minutes in a listening attitude, gradually drew forth its shuddering length of form and advanced on the floor towards Artemas. Its crest, or hood, was curiously speckled with black and white, and the various spots on its body brightened and dilated with still increasing beauty, as it seemed to feed on sound, and with half erected form, followed the music with a graceful undulating motion, and kept the most perfect time. When Artemas thought he had sufficiently exhibited himself and the serpent, he made a sudden pause, and the creature dropped down as if deprived of sense. He did not leave it time to recover itself, but immediately seizing upon it, tied it up in the bag. He was then going to open his basket and show his dancing snakes, which, he said, would come and go as he played on his dulcimer or ceased from playing, and would twine themselves round him without doing him any injury. But every one was quite satisfied with what they had already seen, and he departed with his new prey.

On the morning of the passover, Laadon set out with

his friends towards Bethany, a village situated at the foot of the Mount of Olives. He went to meet some relations and conduct them to his house, and took Sephora to make some inquiries after her old friend Arbilio, who had not been heard of since he went up to the feast the year before. They must necessarily go through much of the city in their way thither; and when they came opposite to the iron gates of the prison, their course was impeded by the unusual concourse that was gathered before it, and extended from thence to the judgment hall, and in attempting to force their way through the crowd, they got so entangled in it that they could neither move one way nor the other, and were obliged to wait till it was dispersed.

The governor had promised the Jews to pardon one of their condemned criminals; an unusual interest was excited, and the anxious relations were waiting between hope and despair, to know which it should be. The Roman soldiers, who guarded the door, compassionating their feelings, had admitted them within the range themselves occupied, so that they stood apart from the tumultuous crowd and conspicuous to the eyes of all the people. The great bar that secured the entrance to the place of justice was, at length, heard to fall. Every voice was instantly hushed, and a deep silence prevailed, which was only interrupted by the harsh grating of the iron bolts. The ponderous folding doors were then opened, and discovered the criminals coming forth to their fate. Two malefactors first issued out, each bearing the cross on which they were to suffer. Murder was marked in large characters on one cross, and treason on the other. The poor creature who was attempting to carry the latter, required another to assist him, and seemed bowed down with penitence and grief. He did not

dare to look on his fellow-creatures, but cast one upward glance to heaven, and then bent his eyes on the ground; and as he passed his wailing family, inclined his body nearer to the earth; and thought that crucifixion could have no such lacerating nail, as that anguished cry of, brother, sister, father, wife, and friend, that then pierced and tore his very heart. The other criminal had a dreadfully hardened look. His glaring eye bid defiance to shame, or infamy, or death; and the hollow laugh of a demoniac shook his frame as he bid adieu to half a dozen haggard wretches, who seemed more nearly allied to him by the bands of vice than by the ties of nature.

A manacled youth was then brought forward towards his friends to be liberated. The hectic of joy and hope had already faintly tinged his sallow cheek and relumed his languid eye; but when he was delivered to his parents, when he felt his chains falling, beheld himself surrounded by his weeping, smiling kindred; and heard the air read with the gratulating shout of an applauding multitude; the tide of happiness flowed too swiftly on his soul, and overwhelmed all his sentient powers, so that he was borne through the crowd in a swoon.

Other prisoners then came out, and all the rest of the people who had been in the court, and part of the crowd moving off in one direction and part in another, Laadon and his company were able to proceed. They passed the pool of Bethesda; but they had already lost so much of the day before the judgment hall, that they had no time to stop and commiserate the afflicted beings who were waiting for the moving of the waters. Each of the five porches, which were built round the pool was completely filled, and despair seemed the only misery that might not be found in them.

When they had crossed the brook Kedron, and the

valley of Jehoshaphat, and had advanced within sight of the sequestered village of Bethany, they met Laadon's friend coming towards Jerusalem, and turned again to go with him; for it was now near the very eve of the passover, and they scarcely got home before the observances of the feast began. They first searched the house with the most scrupulous exactness in every part, to see that there was no leaven in it. Every crumb of bread was thrown away or destroyed. Cakes of unleavened dough were then baked, and all the family being assembled together with great solemnity, the lamb was brought forward and slain in the presence of them all. A basin was held to receive its blood, and a bunch of hyssop dipped in the bason to sprinkle the upper lintel and posts of the door, while they knelt down and prayed that the destroying angel might not be allowed to approach that dwelling. The lamb was then roasted whole, and eaten in haste with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, while they all stood round a large table with their tunics girded, their sandals on their feet, and their staves in their hands as ready to depart. Not a bone of the lamb was broken either in the slaying, the dressing, or the eating, and the flesh that remained was consumed with fire.

When this meal was ended, Laadon called the attention of his children to the meaning of it, and explained to them with great perspicuity, that it was at once both a memorial of the past, and a type of the future mercies of God. He then poured out a cup of wine, and drinking of it himself, passed it from one to the other, till all had partaken of it, and the holy festival was concluded by singing the great Hallel.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE feast of unleavened bread immediately succeeded the passover. It continued seven days; the last of these commemorated their passage through the Red Sea, and was observed with peculiar solemnity.

After the days of the feast were over, Caphtor and Sephora prepared to leave Jerusalem. They proposed to return to Nain by the eastern banks of the Jordan; and, accordingly, left the city by a different gate from the one at which they entered it; and again crossing the brook Kedron and the valley of Jehoshaphat, ascended the Mount of Olives, by that path which David took when he wandered sorrowfully forth, an exile from his royal city, bare-footed, weeping as he went, his head strewn with dust, his heart torn by remorse and pierced by the envenomed fang of filial ingratitude; while conscience, with a voice that broke the silence of his soul, told him that all he felt was but a just retribution for his own rebellion against an Almighty Father. The gloom of the ancient trees seemed to encourage meditation; and the mind naturally sought to retrace the sorrows of the humbled monarch while, ascending this path, which was still called the *path of tears*.

Mount Olivet was divided into three summits; the most northerly was the highest, and, as it were, overhung the city, and afforded one of the finest views of it. Here they took leave of Jerusalem and their friends, who bestowed on them parting gifts; and Sephora, as her last

request, begged of Laadon to continue his inquiries after Arbalio, of whom they had been unable to obtain any certain tidings. They traveled on descending ground till they reached a fountain, which was generally made the first resting-place between the holy city and Jericho. From thence they proceeded along an intricate road, presenting a quick succession of hills and vallies, which, though somewhat sterile by nature, bore the same marks of industry and fruitfulness as those in the more northern parts of Judea.

After traveling for some hours through this cheerful scenery, they reached the confines of the wilderness, a most comfortless and abandoned place, consisting of high rocky mountains so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, and its very bowels had been turned outward.

From the tops of these hills of desolation, the eye looked down on that awful and motionless expanse of waters, whose appearance naturally suggested the idea of death. A high ridge of cheerless mountains, no otherwise diversified than by a quick succession of naked rocks and precipices, and rendered frightful by a multitude of torrents that fell on all sides of them, ran along its eastern coasts.

As they descended towards the plains of Jericho, nature again assumed a gentler aspect, and seemed to have withdrawn her luxuriance from the surrounding regions, only to bestow it in greater abundance on this favored spot.

The plain (the great field, as it was called) was about seventy furlongs in length, and twenty in width. It was situated between two mountains, reaching from the village Genabara to the lake Asphaltes. The river Jordan ran through it, and it was also watered by many lesser

streams ; on the borders of which were fruitful orchards, cyprus trees, palms, and myrobalans, and that little thorny bush called za-cho-ne, whose fruit is so much esteemed among the Arabs for its healing virtues, grew here in profusion. The air was scented with a thousand sweets, but the smell of honey predominated over every other, and the hum of the wild bee's wing formed the unceasing music of the plain.

They pitched their tent near the site of the old city, and did not enter the new, which stood at some distance under a barren mountain of immense length, stretching from the borders of Scythopolis to the coasts of Sodom.

Early on the morrow they left this station, crossed the deep and rapid Jordan on a raft, and encamped by the Dead Sea.

Whilst Caphtor was assisting in setting up the tents, Sephora walked along the margin of this solemn shore. It was all one scene of wild desolation, and marked the footsteps of an avenging God. Images of such vastness and sublimity more than fill, they distend the mind, and produce pain rather than pleasure. She went forward for some way, but found nothing to vary the prospect till she came to an opening in the rocks, where tamerisks and oleanders were growing in luxuriance, as well as various other shrubs that seemed more peculiar to the soil. Struck with the peaceful charms of this narrow glen, she turned into it to admire its bloom, and look for that deceitful fruit whose beauty proves but dust and ashes. She was for a long time unsuccessful in her search, but gathered many shrubs and flowers that were before unknown to her. At length she saw a fruit resembling the description of the apple of Sodom ; and, on gathering it, it proved the same. She examined it attentively, and thought that though a singular, it seemed a perfect pro-

duction of nature, and not a blasted one as was generally imagined. She had now destroyed with her touch the only fruit that grew on the plant; but looking a little higher up the glen, she saw a profusion of them growing over a jutting piece of rock, which though rising abruptly, and at a considerable distance from the path-way, she thought she should have but little difficulty in climbing. Yet she hesitated for a moment whether she should not return for Caphtor, before she attempted to secure her prize. She looked back, and was surprised to see how far she had wandered. She looked forward, and saw that a few paces more would accomplish her wish. She accordingly resolved just to snatch the fruit and then hasten back as fast as she was able. But when she got nearer to the apples, she found them more inaccessible than she had imagined. The rock was so smooth and slippery that it would have been hazardous to climb it; but perhaps a little further on, it would be more practicable. The glen in this place made a sharp angle, and Sephora—whether it was the latent consciousness that she had idly wandered from her protector, or whether it was the arresting hand of the warning spirit that would have stayed her course, we cannot say; but certain it is, that she felt she ought not to proceed. Yet so very near her object, and when it could make but the difference of a few minutes, it seemed absurd to go back. She went forward, and had just turned the fatal angle, when she found herself seized by two Arabs, who darted out of a spacious excavation in the rock, immediately under that point where the apples of Sodom grew.

All her flowery treasures fell at their feet, while she lifted up her hands to implore their pity, and offered the riches of Keroob if they would restore her to her husband. It was in vain she besought them, they under-

stood neither her language nor that of mercy, and the wild ferocity that characterized the expression of their countenances, loudly proclaimed that their hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against them.

They were bare-headed, according to the custom of their nation, and armed with crooked poniards in their girdle. Their horses were fastened within the cave, which also exhibited the remains of the meal they were making when Sephora appeared before it. They did not wait to finish their hamza and doweeda, but hastily drinking large portions of wine, while they alternately held their trembling captive; they lifted her on one of their coursers and galloped off with their prey.

Sephora knew no more till she found herself lying by a fountain, and the Arabs almost drowning her with water to recover her from a swoon, which she wished might have been the final one of death. She looked round on the country, but could not recognize any of its features; only that she supposed that the dark ridge of hills she saw to the west, must be those that bordered and concealed the Asphaltic lake.

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, the Arabs again placed her on horseback, and conveyed her onward with great swiftness, over a wild and pathless country. They had traveled for some hours without seeing any human habitation, when, on gaining the summit of a long and dreary hill, they looked down a wide and verdant vale, where the black and comely tents of Kedar, to the number of several hundreds, were placed in circles on the grassy plain. Drove of camels, and asses, and flocks of sheep, and goats, were feeding round them, and the shepherd boys were keeping watch.

The dewan into which Sephora was conveyed seemed

to be the chief; it was surrounded with guards, stood in the centre of the others, and was composed of loftier tents. As for the fashion of them, it was the same as the rest. They were made of hair-cloth, and of an oblong figure, not unlike the bottom of a ship turned upside down.

The Sheik was not within his encampment; he, and most of his tribe were gone to hunt a lion, which had been roused in the thickets of Abarim.

The two marauders no sooner received this intelligence, than the spirit of the chase lighted up their wild features, and they were impatient to be gone. They called out with vehemence before the door of the Hhy-mas,\* and an old woman appeared, whose hardened features looked as if they had never yet been mollified by compassion. To her custody they committed their prisoner; and, ordering the guards to keep a strict watch, they galloped off.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

THE old woman cast an eye of scrutiny on her new charge, and taking her by the hand led her to her mistress, who was sitting on a mat, with a basket of fruit, a charrah of camel's milk, and cakes of cusassowe bread before her. She was dressed with great study and ex-

\* The name by which the tents of the Arabians are called.

actness, her shining black hair was all gathered together, and hung down in one long plait entwined with pearls. A triangular piece of flexible gold, artfully pierced in various figures, was fastened round her forehead, and an embroidered handkerchief bound over this *sarmak*, falling carelessly on the favorite lock, completed her head dress. Her nose was ornamented with a glittering jewel. Her *jellebba*, a close-bodied dress, was made of gauze, and had the constellation of Bootes painted on it. Her *hyke*, which is the outer covering of the Arabs, and serves them both for raiment in the day, and a covering in the night, was made of grey woolen of the finest texture, and richly embroidered with scarlet poppies. It was not wrapped round her, but lying in loose folds on the ground. This was the object that met Sephora's eye on entering the tent. It seemed such a deliverance to her to be given up by the robbers and consigned to the care of her own sex, that something like hope began to revive in her bosom, and she dared to think of Caphtor, as she cast on the Sheik's wife the most ardent looks of supplication for mercy, and anxiously sought some beam of pity in her painted eye, but she sought in vain. No kind relentings of nature discomposed her measured features, and Sephora saw with a heavy heart, that she might as well have looked for sympathy from her gaudy vest, as from her inanimate and listless countenance.

Happily, however, though pity did not work, another passion did, which, not to slander human nature, was at least as active and as availing. Notwithstanding all the outworks of pride that surrounded her, the Sheik's wife immediately saw in her captive, a powerful rival, who would reduce her to the condition of a slave. Jealousy made her inventive, and roused every faculty she possessed to plan her escape. Not a moment of time was to be

lost, for every thing depended on the thing being accomplished before her husbands's return. She first motioned Sephora to sit down on a mat, and partake of her repast, and then dispatched the old woman into the inner tent, to prepare some of their most savory dishes to welcome their captive guest, as her rank seemed to merit some peculiar honor. (Sephora wore her white raiment, girded with a zone of precious stones, which Laadon had given her on her departure from Jerusalem, and there was besides a dignified simplicity in her deportment that might well be imagined to belong to rank.) The old nurse seemed impressed with the idea of her dignity, and hobbled off with the greatest alacrity to obey this order, and her mistress knew that it would take her long to execute it. But no sooner had she disappeared behind the partition of the tent, than the Sheik's wife rose from her seat, and making a signal of caution and silence, she took the old woman's hyke, which was six feet broad, and several feet long, and wrapping it round Sephora, fastened one end with a bodkin, and in the other, bound up all the cucassowe cakes, the fruit, and the remains of a case of water. Then dipping a cup made of an ostrich egg, in the charrah of camel's milk, she held it to her lips, and as soon as she had drank, unwound the tire that confined her hair, and in the place of it put on the nurse's bur-noose, a sort of hooded cloak that quite covered her head and face, and concealed her flowing tresses, and making a sign to her to walk as if one leg was shorter than the other, she dismissed her from the Rhymas.

As soon as she was gone, her invention was again at work in order to prevent the old woman from having any suspicion that she had been an accomplice in the prisoner's escape. She took the image of their idol that stood in the corner of their tent, and wrapping Sephora's tire

round its head, and covering it with her own hyke, she laid it down on a mat as if asleep, then lying down herself, she closed her eyes, and waited the arrival of her nurse. Fortunately she did not enter this part of the tent till her cookery was quite complete, and it had taken her so long to make her savory meats that it excited no surprise to find both her charges fast asleep, particularly when she observed what a hearty meal they had made on the provisions she had left before them.

She and her mistress usually dozed away an hour or two at this time of the day, and feeling more inclined to join the party than to disturb it, she looked round for her wrappings, but saw that her prisoner had lain down on the place where she left them—this did not distress her, for she knew her master's hyke was as warm as her own, and she soon found she could sleep as soundly in it. No music was ever more grateful to the Sheik's wife, than were now her nurse's well-timed snores. She thought herself sure from all the danger of detection, and resolved to escape suspicion by being the first to give the alarm. She even purposed to accuse the old woman of having favored the escape, or else to persuade her that it must have been effected while they were both asleep.

But let us leave the Arab's tent, and follow Sephora.

The guards, who were thickly stationed round the door of the Hhymas, suffered her to pass, and saw her hobbling nimbly up the western hill, without ever suspecting that she was any other than the person whose dress she had assumed. What the joy of her soul was at finding herself beyond the precincts of the encampment, we will not endeavor to describe. She felt for a time as if she had nothing more to ask of heaven.

It is not in the first moments of deliverance from imminent and immediate danger that the mind pauses to re-

flect on perils in more uncertain forms; but soon terrifying visions began to throng around her. The pursuit of the Arabs when her escape was discovered—the fear of losing her way, and the dread of keeping in it, lest it should be the means of their retaking her—the attack of wild beasts—the distraction of her husband, and the uncertainty of finding him where she left him, even should she escape all the dangers of the way, and her enfeebled frame be able to bear up under the fatigue of traversing these pathless wilds. Why, thought Sephora, is my mind so insatiable of misery as to grasp at all these uncertain horrors; the evil of the passing moment is all that my heavenly father has appointed me to bear, and every thing beyond that, is a burden that I bind on myself? Have I not more cause for gratitude than for distrust, for hope than for fear?

The closing shadows of evening now began to make distant objects more indistinct, and the color of her hyke and burnoose could scarcely be distinguished from the grey stony hill she was descending. This was a favorable circumstance to her escape, but that same duskiness which shrouded her from observation, obscured all the landmarks which were to guide her on her course.

From the time she recovered from her swoon, she had attentively considered the country, and on regaining the summit of the hill, after escaping from the tents of Kedar, she recognized several bold projections of rock, an abrupt height and a scathed oak, that she remembered to have passed on the right hand or on the left, and these now looked like friends offering to guide her back. But darkness so soon perplexed the scene that distant objects were no longer visible. She however distinctly remembered that she had passed through the long valley that lay at the foot of this hill, and she had no hesitation in

pursuing her path in that direction. The valley extended many furlongs, and the way through it was rough and difficult, but she reached the further end of it in safety and without any real cause of alarm, though her weakened spirits had conjured up many imaginary ones, metamorphosing the rocks into Arabs, and the murmuring of the wind into the steps of her pursuers. Here she resolved to continue for the remainder of the night. She crept some little way up the hill that skirted the valley, sat down among the loose stones, and opened the provisions her deliverer had bestowed. Never were food and rest more grateful and more absolutely necessary than she now found them, and her Arabian disguise, which had rather incumbered her in her flight, was now comfortable to repel the cold, and make her endure the hardness of her flinty couch.

With a mind worn by the intenseness of its own feelings, and a body wearied by violent and unabated exertion, she had scarcely eaten her bread and lain down, before sleep came to relieve her from all her terrors and her cares; or, perhaps, we might rather say, to give her a lighter and more visionary sense of them, for the images of the day still continued flitting before her. Now she was chained to the pillar of the Arab's tent, then with Caphtor on the heights of Sapho, but suddenly torn from him and borne away, while the shout of a multitude pursued her. This last impression got more and more vivid, till fear broke the bands of sleep, and she awoke to the horror of finding that this was more than a dream, and that nothing but the heavy sleep into which she had fallen, could have prevented her from being sooner roused by those wild and savage yells that rent the silence of the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

THE moon was set, and the heavens were all clouded over ; no sound of horses' feet was to be heard ; yet Sephora concluded that her pursuers would take their course down the valley, and she scrambled higher up among the brush wood. The shouts became louder, and her fears rose in proportion, and accelerated her speed in reaching the top of the hill. But here her terrors were in some degree relieved by seeing plainly that she was not the object of pursuit.

The shouts proceeded from the Arabian hunters, who had achieved their object, and ensnared the monarch of the forest in their toils ; and she had only heard the yells more distinctly because she had been approaching them.

The brow of the hill, whose summit she had gained, overhung a plain, whose extent could not be discerned, but in it were collected some hundreds of Arabs, wild and fierce as the beasts they were pursuing. They were drawn up into a circle, enclosing an area of about a furlong in diameter. Most of them were armed with a blazing torch in one hand, and a javelin or spear in the other ; while their scimitars suspended from their girdle, gleamed by their side.

Freedom and daring courage flashed from their dark ferocious countenances, and their wild shouts of triumph accorded well with the barking of their war dogs, and the howlings and cries of the various animals who occupied the center of the scene, and had been gradually

drawn together in this narrow compass to meet their impending destruction. In vain did some appear still to defy the power of man. The devouring jaws of the deadly hyena, the broad glare of the lion's eye, the threatening attitude of the springing tiger, the ostrich, with her vainly expanded quivering wing, served but to heighten their savage joy, and raise their dauntless spirit.

All these sights and sounds displacing at once the darkness of the night, and the silence of these deserts, were in the highest degree sublime and terrible.

The slaughter was just at this moment about to commence. The outer circle was composed chiefly of horsemen. Among these she recognized the two who had borne her away; and one with a javelin in his hand, and his arms stretched out in the attitude of command, she presumed to be the chief, from whose tent she had escaped.

She remained for some minutes on the station she had attained, in part from not knowing where to betake herself, but more from inability to move her trembling limbs. As soon, however, as she had time to collect her mind, she considered that this strange scene boded her good rather than evil, since it was evident, that neither the Sheik nor his tribe had visited their tents since her escape from them; consequently, it was not likely that any one was in pursuit of her. And even when they had finished the death-scene of the chase, and returned to their encampment, they might probably be too weary to think of going in search of her; while in the mean time she would be pursuing her way, and perhaps arrive at the place where she would be, before any new danger could overtake her.

These thoughts comforted her mind, and so appeased her trepidation as to enable her to turn from this cruel

scene, quit the brow of the precipice, and slide herself a little way down the hill. But surrounded as she was by darkness, she did not dare to attempt descending it. She feared that much of the night yet remained ; but her sleep had been longer than she imagined, and she had soon the comfort of seeing the dawn begin to glimmer in the east, and afford her light enough to continue her way.

She wished if possible exactly to retrace the steps by which she ascended the hill, and find the place where she had slept, as in her alarm on being so suddenly awoke, she had left the case of water behind. It was in vain that she looked for this now invaluable treasure. There was such a sameness in the nature of the ground, and it was so uncertain which direction she had taken in the dark, that she was convinced it was only wasting her time and strength to search for it any longer.

The light was rapidly increased, and the shouts of the hunters still continued. She was thankful to hear them, being aware that the longer they protracted their savage sport, so much the better would be her chance of escape.

The country from this point was an exceedingly barren wilderness, with so little diversity in it that it offered no clue to guide the traveller on her course. Large masses of rock, bursting through the sterile soil, and a long, gradual, tedious acclivity, of many miles in extent, was the cheerless view that met her eye on leaving the valley. It was but a dreary prospect, and the further she went the more dreary it seemed. She had never experienced till this day the awful power of solitude, or known how utterly insupportable it would have been but for the conscious presence of the Almighty.

There was a stillness, a stagnation, in these deserts, that might be felt. The only appearance of life that they

exhibited, was in some of its most loathsome forms. Reptiles and beetles of various kinds were crawling or basking on the rocks, appearing to enjoy that fervid heat under which she was ready to sink. Yet the certainty that her God was as near her in those oppressive solitudes, as when in the bosom of domestic happiness, enabled her to bear up under the weight of the variously painful sensations that assailed both her body and her mind. Her thirst now became almost intolerable, and the doubt she was in respecting her path, added not a little to her sufferings. Even supposing she was in the right one, she knew she must not hope to meet with any thing to assuage it, till she reached the fountain where she recovered from her swoon, and she recollected after this stony ground was passed, that there was a large sandy tract, where the heat would be still more insupportable. She could scarcely bear to think of it.

How ready is the mind to distrust, yet how often are mercies found in those very things we most dread. It was thus with Sephora. When she came to this sandy part of the wilderness, instead of that increase of suffering which she had anticipated, she had advanced but a little way before she had the joy of finding as much as half a furlong of ground covered over with that juicy species of melon, called by the Arabs, *et-navoi*;\* and when she had quenched her thirst, and had gone on some way further, she was comforted by seeing traces of the horses feet that had carried her away the evening before, and these served her as a guide till the duskiness of the evening rendered them invisible. Still, however, she had not lost her clue, for there was a high solitary tower seated on the summit of a hill, standing at the entrance

\* Water.

of a rocky defile, which had formerly guarded the pass, and still kept its proud station, though now in all the imbecility of decay. The moon, as it appeared at intervals, showed this watch-tower in the distance, and she directed her steps with confidence towards the well remembered Pharos. She even hoped it might be possible to find her way through the defile, to the fountain which lay about the centre of it, where she might quench her thirst and rest for the night. And though all beyond this spot was uncertainty, she trusted that the same Almighty Protector who had hitherto guided and guarded her, would not there abandon her. Her eyes were often directed towards the tower, and she had taken many a weary step in her progress towards it, when she was alarmed by the appearance of light through its narrow apertures. Who could be there—the Arabs? They dwell in tents. Could it be Caphtor?—the desert's dreariness vanished at the thought. The more she pondered on this last surmise, the greater persuasion she had of its reality. What could be more certain than that he would seek her; what more likely than ~~that~~ his steps should have been directed to the tower, and that he should have kindled that fire which might be seen for miles round the country, for the express purpose of inviting her approach. He could not tell that she had been stolen away; he might more naturally conclude that she had wandered among the mountains, till she had lost herself. This appearance, which had at first made her stagger with fear, now became the source of hope and joy. And when she reached the entrance of the defile, instead of turning into it, she boldly climbed the hill on which the tower stood. Sometimes a distrustful thought made her pause, and she stopped to listen; but there was nothing to be heard but the solemn drone of the insects of the night, the rustling

of leaves, and the soft murmur of the evening gale, as it swept over the boughs of the ancient pine trees, sounds which soothe or sadden the mind, according to its previous disposition.

Distrust and fear again became predominant in *her's*, and these local circumstances served to heighten her timidity. Yet still she approached the tower, but it was with more cautious steps. She had now reached its base, and leaned against its mouldering walls, scarcely knowing whether she ought to enter them. The narrow apertures that were left for light, were far above her head, and she saw she must either go into the tower or return unsatisfied, as to what it contained. She fancied it would be her duty to conquer her fears, and follow the impulse that led her to ascend the hill. She went forward to search for the entrance, but in turning the northern angle, she found a wide rent in the building which allowed of her seeing through it without being visible in return. The first sight that met her, was blood on the floor, and the first idea that suggested itself was Capthor's danger and not her own. On looking further, however, this apprehension vanished. A large lamp, containing many lights, was placed in the centre of the building, and immediately opposite sat one of the Arabian priests busily employed in cutting up the bleeding head of a hyena, and searching out its brains. His countenance had in it a wildness and fierceness of expression, such as belongs to a maniac; yet it was mixed with an intelligence in his eyes which seemed to announce all the depths of Satan. His hair was stiffened with gums, and made to stand out all round his face, in imitation of the rays of the sun, and his whole appearance well befitted his savage and necromantic employment, and made her at once shudder and rejoice at the danger she had escaped by

not having entered the tower. He was so fully occupied that there was not much fear of his discovering her as she descended the hill, which she now prepared to do ; but just as she was comforting herself with this thought, in leaning against the fractured wall, one of the stones gave way and rolled into the building. The priest started up with the most ghastly looks of terror, and taking up his lamp and a vessel filled with blood, ran towards the door. Sephora stood, or rather trembled where she was, beneath the dark shadow of the mouldering tower. He appeared not to suspect any human agency, but waving his lamp, and stamping on the earth, he uttered many unintelligible words, and flung the blood around him. Sephora shuddered as she felt some of it fall on her throat.

When he had finished these incantations, he returned to his employment, and she was most thankful to have escaped observation. She no sooner saw him seated again to the dissection of the hyena's head, than she once more prepared to descend the hill, and accomplished it this time, without any new alarm, though not without encountering many difficulties, from the occasional darkness and steepness of the way. However, she not only got down the hill, but found her road up the defile, and reached the fountain, where she eagerly quenched her thirst ; and casting herself on the ground, felt her mind overcome with gratitude for all the dangers she had escaped, and filled with the sweetest confidence that her prayers would be heard, and that the morrow's sun would see her restored to her husband.

She was pouring out her very soul before God, half mentally, half articulately, when a hoarse, savage laugh, a rude grasp, an assurance that she was the very person they wanted, and an invitation to come along with them,

seconded by a stout pull, stopped her devotions, and made her dumb and almost stupid with despair. Resistance would have been unavailing, even had she been capable of it, for three stout robbers had assailed her. They had come to the fountain for water, and perhaps but for the sound of her voice might have gone away without perceiving her. Two of them took her by the hand and dragged her down the valley, but she was so stunned by this last misfortune, that she scarcely knew which way she went, or how far, till she was awakened to a sense of her situation by feeling one of the men loose his hold of her, and hearing the sound as of a stone door being lifted up. She could see nothing, for the moon was now set, and the heavy dew that was descending darkened all the air; but she imagined she was now going into the robber's cave, and made a fruitless effort to free herself from the man who held her. This had no effect but to make him retain her with a firmer grasp. His companions now called to him to come on, and he entered a hole in the rock, pulling his captive after him. As soon as they were in, he gave notice to the other robbers, who immediately closed the door, and this they did so hastily that it caught the corner of Sephora's hyke, and dragged it off, together with her burnoose. They crept some way through the rock, which issued again into the open air, and not into a cavern, as she had expected.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

THE cold dew which now visited her face, revived in some degree her spirits, her strength, and her confidence in heaven. She remembered her escape from the Arab's tent, and why not from the robber's den.

At the entrance of this den they were now arrived, and the thieves gave notice of their approach to those within by a shrill whistle, which was echoed by the surrounding rocks, and answered by the rolling away of a heavy stone. The removal of this barrier disclosed her prison. It was a spacious and lofty cavern, whose height and depth the sight could not ascertain, though a blazing fire threw its light far and wide, and as an old man flung logs of wood on it, the flame and sparks mounted high, yet they showed nothing but as it were, an inverted abyss. To the right and left the different strata of rock were formed into dormitories or else into shelves. Some of these were littered over with dried grass or heath, others with provisions, cooking utensils, and weapons of destruction. Three of these dormitories were occupied, and the moanings of pain or disquietude were heard to proceed from them.

On one side were penned a flock of goats, and two men, whose countenances partook but little of the pastoral character, were employed in milking them. A set of hardened sottish looking wretches were gathered round the fire, and two women of almost fiend-like appearance

were talking loudly and coarsely, and were by far the most revolting figures in the group.

Sephora shrunk back, or endeavored to shrink back from this scene, while two of the robbers rushed into the cave, cheering their captain, who was stretched on a bed of sickness, with the news of their prize, telling him they had found an old Arabian woman muttering by the side of the fountain, who could make balsam of Zacone, and dress cucassowe, and pilloc, and leblebby, and would soon be able to bring them all about again. The third then entered, confirming the tidings, and leading after him the reluctant and terrified Sephora. But what could equal their surprise as they turned to behold her, at seeing the old Arabian transformed into a beautiful young woman, whose innocent appearance ill befitted this den of wickedness. The robber who held her loosed his grasp, with a mingled emotion of wonder and respect; whilst the captain of the gang, (whom Sephora instantly recognized, though worn by illness and altered by dress, to be no other than the priest of Baal,) screamed with horror, declaring they had brought the tormenting angel who was come to warn him of his death. Large agonizing drops fell from his face, as he besought her again and again to depart.

In these first moments she scarcely noticed his terror, his screams, or his entreaties; for, from the dark recesses of the cavern, she had heard the clanking of chains, and her name pronounced in a tone which partook of an exclamation and a groan. It was the well known voice of Caphtor. At the same instant, the old man, who was replenishing the fire, turned to look on her, and in him she beheld Arbalio.

The leader of the robbers still continued his agonizing entreaties to her to depart. "Liberate the captive whom

you hold in chains," said Sephora, "and this old man who belongs not to the wicked, and I shall then depart."

New amazement seized the band at finding that all the secrets of their cavern seemed known to her, and superstition so awed them, that the demand had scarcely passed her lips before she found her husband by her side. She grasped his hand while the thieves were taking off his fetters, and raised her thoughts to heaven. Her complexion, which when she entered the cave, fear and weariness had made almost as white as her robe, now became suffused with a glow of devotion, while her uplifted eye, beaming with gratitude, showed a softer, yet scarcely a less dazzling radiance than the zone with which she was encompassed. Even those whose minds were less enslaved by wickedness and superstition, might have been almost apt at this moment to mistake her for something more than human.

Caphtor's manacles were now off, and Arbalio prepared for their departure by lighting two torches of pine-wood, and leading the way to the outlet of the cavern. Sephora and her husband followed, while the thieves shrunk back as they passed, and none of them dared to follow them even with their looks. But the two women whose more hardened and abandoned minds had long since *laid* even that superstitious fear, that forms the ghost of a murdered conscience, had witnessed the whole scene with more suspicion, and they ventured to go after them to the door of the cave, to see which way they took. Then returning to their terrified associates, they rallied them on their fears, told them the prisoners had not flown over the rocks, and that if they were able to get through the door of the second cavern, they should be ready to acknowledge that they were spirits, or angels, or any thing else.

In the mean time Arbalio conducted his liberator and her husband through the intricacies of the pass, till they reached the entrance of the subterranean road; beyond this he had never been since he was first brought in a prisoner. But he had gathered from the conversation of the thieves, that the rock was hollowed out in various directions, that some of the excavations were used as places of sepulchre, that the stone door was so artfully contrived, that only those who knew its construction could remove it from its socket, and that even the robbers themselves did not all know how to accomplish it. These were discouraging circumstances, but they went forward. The bottom of the cavernous path was a fine white sand, and from the traces on it they were able to ascertain which was the right way. They had now reached that part where the rock was so low as to oblige them to crawl along, when a sudden rush of air extinguished the torches, and left them in total darkness. Arbalio thought they had got into some wrong branch of the cavern, and feared some new danger. Caphtor would have gone forward to encounter it, but Sephora begged that whatever befel them they might remain together.

They did not remain long in this anxious situation, for on advancing a little farther she had the comfort of laying her hand upon her woolen hyke, and following it with her touch till she found where it was shut into the door, she proclaimed the welcome news of their being arrived at the extremity of the cavern. The hyke had kept the door from being quite closed, and but for this circumstance they had probably found it impossible to open it. This also it was that had occasioned the rush of air that extinguished their torches.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE thankfulness of their hearts when they had passed this last barrier and closed the stone portal could scarcely be expressed. Excitement had given Sephora a temporary strength, but now all intermediate danger was passed, she became sensible how completely she was exhausted, and felt that she must rest. Caphtor proposed they should remain where they were till there was light enough to guide them, and wrapping her round in her friendly hyke and burnoose, made her promise to close her eyes and endeavor to sleep, while he and Arbatio kept watch.

When the sun was risen, they resumed their way towards the place where they had pitched their tent. Caphtor said they were not more than eight hours from it, and he had marked the way so well, that though he passed it by moonlight, he thought he should be able to find it again. Their thoughts had yet been too tumultuous to allow of any regular narrative of the events that led them to the robbers' cave, but now that their feelings were more calm, and their situation more secure, they were each impatient to hear the other's adventures.

Sephora related hers first; and then Caphtor began with describing the misery of his mind at missing her, and the various fancies that possessed him. Sometimes he thought she had fallen into the sea, or over precipices; then, that she must have become the prey of robbers or

wild beasts. At length he traced her steps to the entrance of the shrubby glen, and when he saw it, readily imagined she might have been tempted to wander down it. He followed the same path she had taken, called out her name, and often fancying, in the roar of the distant cataract, or the reverberation of the rocks, that he heard her voice.

He went forward till he came to the cave where the Arabs had seized her; and here the certainty of her fate flashed at once upon him. The gathered flowers that had fallen from her hand, the place where the horses had been standing, the remains of the unfinished meal, told the whole truth to his distracted mind. Yet a ray of hope broke through his despair: he could trace the print of the horses' feet on the turf, and he might yet pursue and rescue her. He gathered up the provisions which he thought seemed providentially left in the cave, and went eagerly forward, following the steps of the coursers with a speed that would almost have left them behind. He continued his way with unabated swiftness for almost two hours, when the light failing, he could no longer trace his road, and he was constrained to sit down and wait till the tedious night was past, well knowing that if he once lost his only guide, all hopes of recovering her would be gone for ever.

The sense of his own calamity, and the dangers to which she might be exposed, now came upon his mind with redoubled keenness. During the speed of pursuit, there was scarcely time for any regular chain of thought, and his misery found some relief in the vigorous exertions he was making to recover his lost treasure. But now that he was left to solitude and inaction, the bitterness of his grief became almost intolerable, and would have been utterly so, but for that alleviation he found in

fervent and unceasing prayer—it seemed the only stiptic for his bleeding heart.

He was not left very long in this situation, for two robbers who were prowling about these deserts had caught sight of him from the heights, and darted on him as their prey. He offered no resistance; he even hailed their approach, for he looked on them as guides who would conduct him more quickly to Sephora. He questioned them about what luck they had had that day before, but could gain no satisfactory intelligence. He renewed his inquiries when he got to the cave, but with no better success. And when he found that she was not there, the whole bent of his mind was to accomplish his escape, and he only dissembled his grief that he might the more surely attain his purpose. His readiness to accompany the thieves, had made them look on him as one of desperate fortune, who would probably be glad to be admitted to their fellowship. They had not any suspicion of his design to escape, and at night they only used the common precaution of rolling the stone to the mouth of the cave.

Caphtor was one who offered his assistance to do this, and ponderous as he found it, he did not despair of being able to move it alone, for he had been used to athletic exercises from his childhood. Lifting the burthensome stone was one of the favorite games with the Hebrew youth, and one at which he had often borne off the prize. He waited impatiently for the hour of sleep, but the captain and his crew were so desirous of giving a favorable idea of the happiness of their lives, that they made a great display of their good cheer, and protracted their coarse and vicious mirth till a late hour. Caphtor was obliged to excuse his dulness by acknowledging himself tired, and telling them that he had run from the borders of the Dead Sea, to the place where they found him, in

less than two hours. This they admitted was a sufficient excuse for weariness, and suffered him to lie down on the mat assigned him, while one by one they followed his example; and he had soon the comfort of hearing that they were all in sound sleep. But to make himself more sure that this was actually the case, he got up, making some little noise, and advanced towards the place where they had left the wine and provisions, as if his purpose was to take more of them. This he thought would be sufficient to make them call out if they were awake, and yet that it would not be looked upon as any heinous crime that would subject him to severer imprisonment. No one spoke or moved. The last night's excess had given such a deadness to their sleep, that a trifle would not be likely to rouse them. He advanced towards the mouth of the cave, and succeeded in moving the stone; but instead of lodging it on the shelf of rock where it usually rested, it rolled down into the cavern with a tremendous noise, and made the whole crew start up and fly to arms. Caph-tor in the mean time escaped out of the den, but the pursuit after him was so immediate, that he was soon overtaken. He struggled hard for his liberty, wounded two of the thieves, and disarmed another, but being overpowered by numbers, he was loaded with irons, led back to the cave, and condemned to be starved to death; a more immediate termination to his sufferings being thought too merciful a fate.

He had just brought his adventures to this period, when stopping to take up something from the ground, he said to Sephora, "Now I am sure that we have been pursuing the right path, for this is the exact spot where the robbers found me. These are the withered remains of those flowers that tempted you from me. When I saw them lying before the Arab's cave, I gathered them up,

scarcely knowing what I did, but they seemed to me the last token I might ever find of you. They fell from my hand when the robbers seized me, and I was made a captive myself. Can I see them again without feelings of the most lively gratitude towards that goodness which has again brought us together, and made them as a way-mark in the wilderness."

From this place they continued their journey with renewed spirits, but when they had proceeded some distance, they became alarmed by observing fresh marks of hoofs on the turf, by which they conjectured that the Arabs had passed that way in search of Sephora, who had probably escaped them by being taken to the robbers' den.

"How apt we are, in times of sorrow," said Caphtor, "to exclaim with our father Jacob, 'All these things are against me;' yet how often have the most afflictive dispensations of Providence, a manifest connection with some of our sweetest mercies. How often, even on earth, do we gather the fruit of that joy which was sown in tears."

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

ARBALIO proposed that they should not go through the shrubby dingle, lest the Arabs should be lying in wait, and he undertook to show them another pass, which they

reached and traversed in safety ; but when they arrived at their tents they found them deserted, and feared they had been pillaged likewise. However, on entering, they had the comfort of seeing refreshments of all kinds ready set out for them, though not a creature in or about the tents.

The attendants had made all things ready, but at length becoming alarmed that neither their master nor their mistress returned, they agreed to arm themselves and go in search of them. Under their present circumstances, seeing food was seeing life. They needed not mechanism of sober custom, nor the cold sence of duty to prompt the voice of gratitude. Their hearts were heard in heaven before their lips.

They had scarcely finished their repast when the trampling of horses made them run to the door of the tent ; it was their attendants returned with two Arab prisoners, by whom they had been attacked. They were the same who captured Sephora. One of them had a large sack tied on his horse, and the other had a lion's skin hung round his shoulders, the trophy of his recent prowess. Their countenances were dark and sullen, and they seemed to disdain to ask a mercy they would not have granted.

Caphtor, who understood something of their language, told them they had nothing to fear from his revenge, neither would he reproach them, he would rather teach them mercy by exemplifying it, and should only detain them as prisoners till the morrow, when he intended to strike his tent and move out of that neighborhood. He desired them to unfasten the sack from the horse, which he now perceived to move, as if it contained something alive, and going towards it heard low moans, he turned it round to open it, but found it curiously sewn up on all

sides. The Arabs unstitched it with their cimeters and discovered a miserable old woman more dead than alive. Sephora perceived her to be the same to whose care she had been consigned. She had her laid on a couch, and gave her such things as were necessary to restore her.

It was found on inquiry that she had been accused by the Sheik's wife of having contrived the escape of her captive, and in consequence had been condemned to be sewn up in a sack and thrown into the Dead Sea, unless the pursuers, who were immediately set off in search of their lost prize should be able to regain her. The poor old creature was assured that she should be sent back in safety, and that the Sheik should be informed she was quite ignorant of the escape. Instead of showing any joy at this promise, she threw herself on the ground in the most abject manner, and besought that she might not be sent back, but might live in that tent as a slave; and it was found so impossible to quiet her fears or silence her entreaties, that at length she carried her point, and the following morning saw her seated on the wagon that carried the tent's furniture; while the Arabs, with an eager expression of joy and surprise, beheld their horses restored to them, and almost in the same instant carressing the animals, and laying their right hand on their breast, to give the *asslem-mak* \* to their benefactors, they mounted and were out of sight.

While the party were slowly pursuing their route towards Nain, Arbalio was called on by his young friends to relate by what adventures he had got into the cave.

"I would," said Arbalio, "that I had a more instructive history to relate, but to account for my being found in these deserts, I must revert to a period when religion had no sovereign influence over me, when I sought the things of this world as my supreme good, and when, by

\* Compliment of peace.

coming in early contact with vice, I became in some degree a partaker of its wretchedness. Oh! if the young might be warned by my example, to form their friendships with those who seek the favor of God, rather than with those who seek the favor of man, I shall not have suffered in vain. Neither have I suffered in vain, for I have now learned to cease from pursuing worldly happiness, and worldly happiness pursues me; and whatever may seem to be wanting in the outward gift, I find to be doubly and trebly made up in the inward blessing. At the time when I lost my parents, I was so young that I have no recollection of them but in the parting scene when they put me in the arms of Sebat, and solemnly recommended me to the father of the fatherless. Sebat carried me to his home and I saw them no more.

“This friend of my father’s had an only son named Niger, a boy of almost unbounded genius and passions. If it was my misfortune to be without parents, it was his to have them. They indulged him in every wish; no thought was so wild, no temper so vindictive, no humor so indolent, but their injudicious fondness sought either to excuse or to gratify it. But I ought not to wonder at their infatuation, since my own fully equalled it, for I clung to this boy with an attachment as partial and even more undivided than their own.

“Mine was one of those pliant minds, that seem as naturally formed to lean on something stronger than itself, as the ivy is to entwine the cedar or the oak. Niger and I grew up together, we were each eminent for those qualities in which the other was deficient, and seemed formed for each other’s happiness.

“Sebat was rich, and all the advantages that riches can bestow he desired that his son should enjoy. The most learned masters were accordingly sought for him,

but sometimes he refused to see them for many weeks together, then he would suddenly apply to study and in a few days leave me far behind, who had been regularly plodding on. These sudden blazes of his genius, instead of withering my friendship, served only to ripen it, for I considered him so far above me, that they never excited my envy, or discouraged me from going quietly on in my humbler path.

“It was agreed that both of us were to be merchants, which was the trade of our fathers. But before we entered upon the active duties of our calling, we were under a promise of spending some months with Julius, a friend of Sebat’s, who lived on the banks of the Jordan. The family of Julius consisted of himself, an infant child, his wife Jaachonia, and his sister Tryphosa. A happier, or a more united household than what it was when we entered it, had never been my fate to behold.

“Julius was of a frank and unsuspicious temper, yet hasty and somewhat haughty, and when his passions were roused, he had no control over himself, though they often yielded to the gentle influence of his wife. Jaachonia had a thoughtful and a penetrating mind, and estimated qualities not so much by their splendor as their worth. It seemed as if she immediately saw into the real character of Niger, for she evidently slighted him, and sometimes sought to mortify his pride, while she endeavored to raise me in my own and other’s estimation, by paying the greatest deferences to my opinions, and by often repeating my observations. These were distinctions I was so wholly unaccustomed to, that I do not know but they increased the bashfulness they were intended to remove. Yet I felt most grateful for her kindness, and after a time my natural shyness wore off in her society, and I was able to converse with a brother’s free-

dom. Perhaps, the secret hope that I might some time or other really claim that privilege, gave me more pleasure and confidence in her company than I should otherwise have felt.

I had not been long under the same roof with Tryphosa before she filled all my thoughts. She was, in my eyes, at least, thrice shining; for beauty, sense, and modesty, were hers. But if I wished to describe her manner, her air, her person, her voice, I need but point to Sephora. To acknowledge my weakness, and to give you an idea how strong the likeness between them must be, I have only to say, that when I turned round last night and beheld her in the cave, the first idea that rushed on my mind was Tryphosa—not herself, but her spirit, and that bloody stain on her throat seemed to me as the murderer's wound.

“But to continue my story—

“I never had a thought that I did not confide to Niger, and I told him of my wishes and my hopes. He tried to laugh me out of them, and spoke disparagingly of the object of my affections. But I vindicated my choice, maintained my own opinion, and dared to entertain a thought contrary to his. This displeased him, and he parted from me in anger, while I felt most wretched at having lost his friendship, and for the first time in my life began to think that the world might have some rankling thorns among its sweetest flowers.

“I wandered pensively and sorrowfully down between the banks of Jordan, and was returning homewards, as miserable as I went forth, when I saw my beloved Niger coming to meet me, and holding out his hand in token of reconciliation. My very heart sprang forward to grasp it, and I felt at that moment that no sacrifice would be too great to make, so that I might but recover his favor;

but he required none ; on the contrary he came to soothe me with the fondest schemes, and give my hopes a more decided form than they had yet dared to assume.

“ He told me that the first effort of his friendship had been to try and disengage me from my passion, and this he still thought the truest kindness, but since that endeavor had failed, and my affections seemed immoveably fixed, his next desire was to see my wishes gratified, and to do all that he could to further their success. He then reminded me of my youth, and told me it would be wrong to acquaint Tryphosa of my regard till it had obtained the sanction of Sebat, but that he would return home before the term of our visit had expired, and obtain it for me. That, in the mean time, I might advance myself in the affections of the family. That it was evident Jaachonia already looked on me with the most friendly regard, and of course her sister would be more biassed by her opinion, than by that of any other person. He therefore advised me by the most assiduous attentions, to endeavor to secure and increase her kindness, while he would be equally watchful in seizing every opportunity of impressing Julius and Tryphosa in my favor, and of making them sensible of what he was pleased to call my unassuming worth, and those qualities which so eminently qualified me to enjoy and adorn domestic life.

“ This arrangment was not only calculated to gratify my hopes, but it seemed to me to be formed with the nicest attention to the peculiarities of my feelings, and I felt it as one of those tender and imperishable ties by which friendship binds the heart.

“ Julius was not uncourteous, yet he seemed to despise, or perhaps to overlook me ; while his young kinsman excited his most unbounded admiration. I wished for his esteem, but to make advances to any one, and

especially to one twice my age, was so foreign to my nature, that had I remained for years under his roof, I probably should never have attempted it. Niger's offer therefore, of interesting him in my favor was most acceptable to me. Nor was his proposal in regard to his endeavoring to advance me in the good opinion of Tryphosa, less so, for if I was shy with my friends in general, I became absolutely dumb when I found myself with her. But in the society of Jaachonia it was otherwise, my bonds seemed to fall from me, and I enjoyed a freedom from that tyrannous reserve that usually enslaved me. In our social walks and occupations I often contrived to detach her from the rest, that I might talk of Tryphosa, or hear her talked of: while I never doubted but my interests were going on well with my friend, for I knew that Niger's eloquence never went to the heart with a surer aim than when it was employed in describing the domestic virtues and those kindred affections which are as "the parent of the home-born joys." I was in too much habitual awe of Niger, ever to dare to question him on the immediate subject of his frequent conversations with my beloved Tryphosa. But he now and then dropped a word or two, which led me to suppose his exertions on my behalf had not been in vain. I once ventured to ask him if a more intimate acquaintance with her had not raised her in his esteem? He acknowledged that it had. But I was mortified by the manner in which he made the confession, for it gave me an idea that he had been more careful not to say any thing grating to *my* feelings, than explicitly to declare *his own*, and I feared in his heart that he still had but a mean opinion of her.

"We had now been more than three months in the house of Julius. They seemed to me but as a single

day, or gentle vision of the night, and the course of time was scarcely heeded ; till, as I was one evening taking my favorite solitary ramble, my friend came to me, and reminded me that our visit must have an end, and said, that he thought the proper time was now come to ask for Sebat's consent to my union with Tryphosa, and that he proposed going home on the morrow to obtain it for me, and returning again before the next moon. He then inquired if I had confided my hopes to Jaachonia. I told him I had not, but I was sure she was fully aware of them, and did not despise the idea of having me for a brother, for she had often hinted as much to me, and one day said, how much happier it would make her to see her sister the wife of a quiet humble-minded man, than to have her united to one of the most brilliant talents, which, when unaccompanied with good principles, she thought were but like the flashes of the storm, beautiful, awful, and dazzling, but portended mischief and destruction to all within their influence.

"Niger's countenance altered as I said this, but he made no remark, and I bent my eyes to the ground, not even daring to question his looks. It now first occurred to me that Jaachonia might have alluded to him when she made this speech, and I saw that he certainly considered it in that light ; but the high opinion I entertained of my friend, and my belief that all his assiduities to Tryphosa were on my account, had made me both hear and repeat her words without suspecting they were aimed at him.

"We walked on in silence, and I suffered much at finding I had wounded his feelings. He, however, recovered sooner than I expected, when he advised me by all means explicitly to declare my intentions, and mention the object of his journey to Sebat's ; and proposed, as a

relief to my shyness, and the difficulty of preventing interruption if I attempted any private conversation in the house, that he would immediately return and conduct Jaachonia to the spot where I then was. I objected to bringing her so far from home at that late hour, and particularly as it was a time when she was usually occupied with her child; but he combated my scruples, and said he was sure that when she understood I wished to speak to her on a subject that greatly concerned her sister's happiness, she would not think any occupation, or time, or distance an obstacle to our communication. He told me to walk backwards and forwards where I then was, till I saw them coming, and departing as he gave the injunction, he was quickly out of sight.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

"THE crisis of my destiny now seemed approaching, and the hopes which had so long floated in vision before me, were about to be crushed or crowned. I paced to and fro for about an hour, in the greatest perturbation of mind, sometimes stopping to try and lift the veil of fate, then looking impatiently for my friends, longing, yet dreading to see their approach. But my eyes sought them in vain. The duskiness of evening was now coming on, and there must have been ample time for them to have appeared, even making great allowance for unfore-

seen delays. I resolved to wait no longer, and was just about to return when I saw Jaachonia coming alone. This threw me into a new set of uncomfortable feelings, as I had now to tell my own story without the assistance of my friend. Jaachonia, however, immediately relieved me from this embarrassment, by beginning the subject for me, and I found no hesitation in going on with it, and giving her the history of my heart. She avowed herself happy at what I told her, and the joy and animation of her countenance convinced me that she really was so, while I was in transports at seeing my hopes brighten and all the mists which obscured my road to happiness clearing up before me.

"This exceeding joy was, however, of short continuance, for as I was returning home with her, she told me how much she had been mistaken in the views of Niger towards her sister, that she had never doubted but that his assiduities were on his own account, she had also feared he had succeeded too well in gaining her affections, for that some new attachment had certainly diverted the course of that confidence and love which used to flow in an undivided stream towards herself. She did not know what Julius' opinion was on this subject, but that she had always believed it to be the same as her own, though, when she had questioned him he had refused to satisfy her, saying that he knew nothing but what Niger had told him in confidence.

"She now saw that the nature of that confidential communication was different to what she suspected, and my explanation of the plan agreed upon between us, accounted satisfactorily for the motives of his conduct. She said she could not describe to me the weight that was removed from her mind when she found that it was myself, and not Niger, who had robbed her of her sister's

heart, for she had always had the worst opinion of him, and been more struck by his overbearing pride, and consummated artfulness, than by those dazzling and splendid talents, by which he was generally estimated. And even now, added Jaachonia (though, perhaps, it is but the habit of unfavorable thought) I cannot recall him to my mind, without my fears returning that he is not what he pretends to be, and I still think that I see hypocrite written in his smile, and villain in his frown.

“I was startled at these bold expressions from the lips of my gentle friend, and endeavored to vindicate Niger, and give her a more favorable opinion of his character. Whether I succeeded I know not, but I soon found that my words expressed a confidence in his integrity which my heart began to distrust, for Jaachonia had unbarred the portals of suspicion, and soon such a maddening train rushed out, that my senses seemed as if they must become their victim.

“I walked on in the most distressed state of mind, sometimes overwhelmed with those dark suggestions, and then endeavoring to chase them from me as unworthy of my friend and of myself. When we reached the house, Niger was not there; it was more than an hour after when he entered it with Julius. I thought I could not have supported the conflicting emotions of my mind—but he took no notice of my disturbed manner, and soon after left the room. I was so absorbed in my own feelings that I was scarcely conscious I was still in the presence of Julius and his wife, till the former observed I seemed ill, and desired Jaachonia to bring me a cup of the wine of Sorek, that she would find standing in the banqueting room. With her accustomed kindness she ran to fetch it, and while she was gone, Julius questioned me as to what had disordered me. I had no inclination to

open my heart to him, but stammered out some evasive answer, and was relieved from any further explanation by the entrance of Jaachonia with the cup of wine. She was advancing with it towards me, when, casting her eyes on her husband, and seeing a death-like paleness on his countenance, she uttered an exclamation of tenderness and fear, and springing towards him, held the wine to his livid lips. He dashed it from her hand with a violence that threw the cup to the other end of the room, and grasping her arms, said he wanted fresh air, and tauntingly bade her take him to her favorite walk by the river. The alarming expression of latent rage and undefined terror which they severally exhibited on quitting the room, made me rise up to follow them. But Jaachonia made a sign to me to return. I then ran to seek Tryphosa, as I thought she might interfere where I could not. She was no where to be found, and on inquiry I learnt she had a few hours before set off for the house of a friend. I then asked for Niger, his influence over Julius was almost unbounded, and I blamed myself for the time I had lost in thinking first of Tryphosa instead of immediately seeking for him, and sending him to appease his friend—but to my amazement I found that Niger, almost immediately after he entered the house with Julius, had mounted one of his swiftest dromedaries, and had not been heard of since.

“Much time had necessarily been lost in these fruitless inquiries, and still more I fear in giving way to those desponding and marvelling sensations, with which the circumstances of the house inspired me. I desired the servants to follow their master, but his temper was so violent they feared to go.

“On hearing this, Jaachonia’s restriction had no longer any power over me, for I could not be satisfied without

ascertaining her safety. I demanded which way they took, and followed the path I had so lately returned with her. The night was light and calm, but no voice was heard, no person seen; I walked on, I called aloud, but no answer was returned. I reached the spot where we had had our interview. A man darted out of the Tamarisks that overhung the river—it was Julius! Julius alone! He came close to me and said, in a hollow, phrensied voice, ‘Wait for her,—Hark!—those are her footsteps in the stream.’

“His words, and still more his manner, harrowed up my soul. I rushed down the lower banks of the Jordan, and made my way through the tangled underwood, till I reached the river. Never had it looked so deep and solemn. The dark shadows of its wooded banks fell far across it, and, excepting the flow of waters, and here and there the moon-beam gleaming in its rapid current, all was darkness and silence; yet if it had witnessed any deed of horror, it told no tale. I watched long, dreading to see her whom I loved as my sister and my friend, rise from beneath the rippling wave—nothing appeared. I walked lower down, and turned an angle in the bank; a shivering horror ran through my frame. The moon shone bright on the spot, the grass was flatted down, a naked osier bow, distorted, but not separated from its place of growth, hung flaunting over it. Its striped leaves were scattered below, and showed it had been clung to in vain.

“I cast off my upper garb and dived into the river, but I found her not. The rapid current had doubtless carried her far away, for though an expert swimmer, I could scarcely resist its force. I returned to the house of Julius; a fever had seized his brain, and from the ravings of his delirium, we found that some one had been work-

ing on his impetuous mind to make him think evil of his wife and me. He often held arguments as with another, by which it appeared that he had not easily been wrought upon to believe the malicious report; that as an evidence of the truth of it, he had been referred to the place of our interview the evening before; that he had crept secretly along the Jordan's wooded banks, had witnessed the anxious pacings to and fro, the earnest conversation, and the mutual joy of meeting which our countenance expressed. That he had mingled a deadly poison in the cup of wine, been stung to madness by his wife's presenting it to him, and had finished the scene of desperation, by taking her to the place where he had seen us together, and plunging her into the stream.

"O the miserable, wretched Julius! Even now my blood turns back as I recall thy ever wakeful, glaring eye, holding communion with the sightless air. Thy trembling hand mixing the deadly draught; thy laboring form dragging the suppliant victim; thy vacant arms, rising convulsive from the ruthless throw that flung away thy peace.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

"TRYPHOSA as yet knew not of these horrors; I flew to the house of her friend to prepare her for them. Her friend had never seen her. I traveled day and night to

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Sebat's. Niger had not been there. I traced and pursued them to Joppa; they had embarked and sailed for Tyre.

"I can attribute it to nothing but to that goodness of the Almighty which has since been more abundantly displayed to me, that my senses survived these repeated shocks. My health however fell a victim to them.

"Another vessel bound for Tyre was to sail in three days. I took a passage in it, but in the mean time became so exceedingly ill, that the master refused to admit me on board, fearing I should die before we made the port. This disappointment added to my disorder, and it was many moons ere I reached Tyre. When I did get there, I could hear no tidings of the fugitives. But after months of fruitless inquiry, I found that my beloved Tryphosa was no more, and the darkest stories were related of her fate. Niger was beyond the reach of my vengeance. He had turned idolater, and had left that country endeavoring to spread the worship of Baal in other parts. Alas, poor Tryphosa! she found his beguiling tongue, which knew how to touch every tender and virtuous feeling in another's breast, had never yet called them forth in his own.

"I was now cut off as foam upon the waters; the dream of life and hope seemed past, and it was long ere my severed soul sought for another place of rest. But man is not created to be long unhappy. The very inconstancy of his mind prevents the continuance of misery.

"I recovered slowly from the blow my affections had received, and in the course of time, many other prospects of worldly happiness have risen up before me, which have promised fair and looked refreshing; but like the mirage to the pilgrim in the desert, they have still disappointed, and instead of the cooling, thirst-allay-

ing waters, they have proved but the burning sandy plain.

“The merchant under whose protection Niger and I were to sail, happened to touch at Tyre. He commiserated my situation, and persuaded me to embark with him for other lands. I was absent many years, and probably the multitude of objects that were presented to my mind prevented the corrosions of grief.

“On my landing again in Judea, one of my first inquiries was after Julius. I found that in a few months after I had left, he had recovered his reason, though he still remained in a very dejected state of mind, and great bodily feebleness. That his only solace was his infant son, who he could scarcely bear to have out of his sight; that he was one day carrying him on the roof of the house, when the child gave a sudden spring out of his arms, fell in the paved court, and was taken up dead. This last bereavement, though he looked upon it as a just retribution, was more than he could bear; he fled, no one knew whither; but it was conjectured that he left the country, as he took with him great riches.

“I never was able to trace any thing more concerning the fate of Julius, till a few weeks before Patrobus died; when, as I was walking with him down the vale to see what promise of fruit the olives showed, he happened to mention incidentally the lunatic’s den, and told me his early recollections of the being who had lived there. I questioned him much on the person of this unfortunate, and not a doubt remained on my mind but it was Julius. This discovery raised up so many dormant thoughts, that I was greatly affected, and deferred for the present giving any explanation of my feelings to my friend—his death, soon after, as you too well know, prevented it for ever.

“My curiosity was now roused to make out, if possi-

ble, the remaining days of Julius. I inquired, wherever I thought it possible I might obtain information, but all was without success, till I repaired to Jerusalem about this time last year, when one, whom I met at the feast of the passover, told me, that an old man who was reported to be the person I inquired for, had lived for many years in a cave on the eastern borders of the Dead Sea.

“The person who gave this information had formerly served in the family of Jaachonia. He told me that her father had a brother who must have dwelt somewhere in my neighborhood. He had often heard his master mention such a person, though from the convulsed state of the country at that time, the families had no intercourse. He believed it was somewhere in the vicinity of Mount Tabor that he lived. I inquired more particularly of whom he spoke, and found it was of the father of Patrobus. Thus I discovered that the beloved object of my youthful affections, and the chosen friend of my declining years, had been nearly allied to each other; and you, Sephora, find, that the compassion you have evinced for the fate of these unfortunate sisters, has not been lavished upon strangers, but upon kindred.

“I lost no time in seeking for the miserable man. The hope that he might yet be alive, that the voice of divine mercy might still reach his heart, and that he might be made sensible of the futility of the attempt of torturing himself into peace, quickened my endeavors, and made me persevere in spite of many unforeseen obstacles that I had to encounter. I had spent many weeks of fruitless search and inquiry, when my footsteps were directed to a desolate hole in the face of a perpendicular rock. It was some yards above the surface of the sea, but a few rough stones were placed for steps, and indicated that I should not be the first human being who had

visited this cave of desolation. As I was climbing the rock, I thought I heard some sound within; I called aloud, but no voice answered. I entered it, and stretched on the floor, beheld the skeleton of a man. Could this be the once haughty Julius? What a lesson for pride! What a sight for ungoverned passion to behold. A piece of vellum was clasped between his hands, the characters on it were much defaced by the damps, but from those which were yet unobliterated, I think it had spoken of heaven and mercy. A jar overflowing with the monotonous droppings from the rock, stood near the place where he lay, and seemed to have been the whole stock of his earthly comforts. An infant's garment and a woman's girdle were bound up together and lay by his side;—the wreck and sad memento of his former happiness.

“I was returning towards the inhabited country, thoughtfully meditating on the fate of Julius, and resolving to get assistance to remove him to the burial place of his ancestors, when my course was arrested by the robbers, who made me their prisoner, and conveyed me to their den. But what was my astonishment on entering it, when I beheld in their leader the perfidious Niger. Time had hardened, and vice had cast its more baleful expression over his features, but the strong character of them still remained, and I instantly knew him. He had not any recollection of me, and the emotion I betrayed excited no surprise. I probably was not the first who had recoiled with horror on entering this dreary abode. What this abode was, I need not describe to you, neither will I dwell much on the time I passed in it. The seasons have in succession rolled over my head, since I descended into it; and during that time I have been the common slave of some of the vilest of mankind; and yet

amidst all these outward circumstances of misery, I have often enjoyed a peace to which I was an utter stranger, when the pomps and pleasures of the world formed the boundary of my hopes and desires. Though constantly in the presence of the man who had so bitterly wronged me, I never felt enmity rising in my heart, but feelings of the sweetest benevolence have often filled my mind, which, though fruitless in regard to their object, have returned like balm into my own bosom.

“Often when I have been hewing down the pine trees that surround the cave, or seeking the goats down the glen, I have felt the free air of the rocks, the light of heaven, and the uninterrupted communion I might then hold with my God, to be positive enjoyments, of which the murky gloom of the cave and the blasphemous tongues of the wicked only made me the more sensible; while at the same time I felt invigorated to sustain even those with patience, since such was his will who had ordered all my path, and appointed the bounds of my habitation.

“The thieves have often wondered at the cheerfulness with which I bore my imprisonment, and the ready obedience I paid to their commands, while at the same time I often remonstrated with them on their wickedness, and called on them to repent. They have latterly treated me with less rigor, and, I think, that their exceeding profaneness has sometimes been checked by my presence. I last night ventured to speak more forcibly than I had ever yet done to Niger. Three of the thieves were gone to the fountain for water, and the rest were out of the cave, some prowling about, and others gone to drive up the goats. He himself, who had been in a declining state for many weeks, was this evening particularly heavy and languid, probably from the effects of his last night’s excess. It seemed to me a favorable moment for trying

to urge some things upon his conscience, and for endeavoring to make him change the cruel sentence he had passed upon Caphtor, of whose fate, though then only interesting to me as that of a distressed fellow-creature, I could not think without shuddering with horror, especially when I remembered the implacable temper of Niger.

“My arguments for mercy made no impression on him. I then assumed a bolder tone, reminded him of the probability of his own speedy dissolution, and asked him if he never heard the dying groans of his broken-hearted parents, the drowning voice of the calumniated Jaachonia, the unburied bones of the credulous Julius, the accusing spirit of the murdered Tryphosa, or the wrongs of the too confiding Arbalio, calling for vengeance on his soul. I told him I was myself that much injured man, and I commanded him by that empire which my wrongs gave me over him, to release his prisoner from that lingering death, and not let another murder add a fresh stain to his already too polluted conscience. This was the first intimation I had given him of who I was, or of my knowledge of his early life. He was stunned by the blow, and was yet writhing under the effects of it, when you entered the cave, and I cannot wonder, that in such a moment more especially, you should appear to him as the spirit of the murdered Tryphosa returned to witness against him.”

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

BUT it is time to remember that we pledged ourselves to our readers to pass over a large portion of Sephora's life, and only besought their patience and indulgence, while they cast on it the trancient glance of retrospection. Instead, therefore, of continuing to follow her in her pilgrimage, step by step, we will briefly observe that she reached her home in safety, that many years, after this period rolled away, during which she felt the corrosive power of earthly joys and riches—pursued after the phantom of worldly happiness, and gradually, and almost unconsciously, lost somewhat of the spirituality of her mind.

Though now accupying a sphere in life where her benevolence and influence might have been so much more diffusive, she did not exert them as she might, but contented herself with wishing well instead of doing well, and her days passed on in a kind of benevolent dream. If misery crossed her path, she relieved it, but she no longer sought out its wretched abode, soothed the parting hour, or pointed out the path to heaven; she no longer listened to the wearying tale of pining sickness, or received the sorrows of the burthened mind; but yielded herself up to that visionary kind of religion, that renounces the harsh and grating duties of humanity, and forgets that we are sent into this world not to muse upon what is right, but to perform it. She thought herself above the love of the world, because she disliked the glare and noise of Keroob's house; but in truth, she was

shut up in a world of her own, where her thoughts, her cares, and her joys were daily becoming more and more concentrated. And yet the cherished objects on which she leaned for rest, broke under her, one after another, and proved but wounding spears. She had several children who were taken away just when their faculties began to expand, and excite all the fondness of her heart. But these warnings of the deceitfulness of the shore on which she was building, instead of causing her to give up her hope of terrestrial happiness, made her seek for it with increased avidity, and she experienced not that sweet and passive joy that leaves all things with God, trusts to the tide of providence, and knows that the advancing wave that lays the treasure at our feet, and the reflux one that bears it from us, and carries it again into the ocean of eternity, are both alike under the direction of his infinite wisdom and love.

Keroob became every day more disagreeable; his greediness of gain, his love of pomp, his ostentatious charity, his all-pervading pride, increased more and more upon him, while the natural peevishness and infirmities of age, fully kept pace with his other offensive qualities.

Sephora, whose judgment was not blinded by natural affection, was probably more sensible than Caphtor to his defects. She was also become more studious of her own ease than she once was, and had lost much of that amiable indifference which she used to feel about her own welfare, and that anxious desire to promote the happiness of others. They resided occasionally for a short time in Mount Hermon. This peaceful abode formed such a contrast to the proud and discontented dwelling of Keroob, that they always thought of going there with impatience, and left it with regret. Sephora at length persuaded herself that there was no reason why they should render their lives uncomfortable by living with Keroob,

and brought together a number of arguments to combat the objections of her husband against forsaking the house of his father. The probability that the death of their two first children might have been occasioned by the air of Nain—the increased peevishness of Keroob, notwithstanding all their efforts to please him, and the unprofitableness of their lives.

In urging this last objection she forgot that if their lives were unprofitable it must be their own fault, as a populous city can never fail to afford a large field for the exercise of mercy.

Keroob fretted much when he found he was to be left to his solitary magnificence, and to be deprived of his children, who were, perhaps, full as much the objects of his pride as of his affection. His complaints did not, however, alter their purpose, but they soothed his peevishness and their own consciences by promises of frequent visits, and these engagements they were at first so punctual in fulfilling, that they were scarcely less with him than when they dwelt under his roof. When once, however, the sense of duty has yielded to self-indulgence, virtue stands but on a down hill path. In the course of time their visits became less frequent, till Sephora left them off altogether, and persuaded herself that her children required her constant presence, and that it would endanger their health either to take them with her or to leave them behind.

Caphtor, who thought the divine command of "Honor thy father and thy mother," made no exception in case of the petulant, and who had never been able so to stifle the voice of conscience, but it would sometimes tell him he had done wrong in forsaking his parent in his old age, fully purposed never to relax in his attendance on him. But when Sephora left off her visits to Nain, she thought the time tedious while her husband was there, and though

she did not say much, he saw that their frequent separations affected her spirits, which were not what they used to be, for the many anxieties and the sorrow she had suffered in the illness and death of her children had taken from them much of their youthful elasticity. Caphtor felt as much as herself in seeing these fine flowers only born to droop and die, and the distressing events of his own family often kept him from his father's. But whether he remained with Sephora or went to Keroob, he always felt that the other was alone, and was often more sensible to the solitude of the one than to the society of the other.

In the mean time his health declined, but the inroads of disease were so gradual, and from one day to another so imperceptible, that those who were most interested in it were the last to observe it. He never spoke of the fatigue he had long felt in his walks to and from Nain, till he became so weak as to be absolutely incapable of continuing them. Sephora was now alarmed about her husband; she sent for their old friend Vashni, who was still living. He came, but not to bring comfort, for he pronounced the disease past cure, and thought it had been brought on by the keen air of the mountain, and living all the winter months in a thin summer habitation, after having been brought up with great tenderness, and always used to the substantial dwelling at Nain. Caphtor was removed to his father's house, but it was too late, his disorder gained on him with great rapidity, neither herb nor mollifying ointment could be found, and he was soon carried to his last earthly abode.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the feelings of Sephora; it will readily be imagined that they were of no common kind, and that with a heart like hers, assailed at once by sorrow and remorse, and much estranged from those heavenly consolations which she had once found a balm

for all her woes, her widowed affections would long continue to feel the mortal pang. Yet still there was one tie that held her to the earth. Zina, her only son, had yet been spared to her; for his sake she combatted hard with grief; for his sake she wished to live; and in him the fondness of her heart still found an earthly place of rest. This last refuge of her affections was now, however, about to fail her; she soon perceived that God had yet another message to her. The disorder which had carried off her husband, had now attacked her child, and he too must be yielded to the remorseless grave. He had nursed his father with the most tender and unwearying care, and had scarcely left the side of his dying bed from the day he was confined to it, till he was carried forth, and consigned to the dreary sepulchre. During these efforts of pious affection, the contagious breath of disease had infected him. His youth struggled hard with the lingering malady, but it was all in vain, he was finally overcome by it, and after months of harassing anxiety, in which his fate hung in doubt before her, his mother saw the cold pall of death spread over his lifeless form.

Who shall describe the state of her soul when she beheld her last earthly idol, for whose sake she had almost forgotten her God, torn from her, and about to be mingled with the dust. Now, indeed, was the cup of trembling put into her hands, and she was made to drink the dregs of a bitter draught. Yet she shed no tear, she uttered no complaint. The high wrought state of her feelings, gave to her mind a kind of delirious strength. She dressed out the body in its grave clothes, and strewed sweet spices over the unconscious clay. But these last offices of humanity were more than her mind could bear; a frantic grief overwhelmed her soul; she fled from the house of death, and wandered forth to bewail her sorrows in the mountains.

It was now night, the city was at rest, and seemed still as the chamber of the mourners. The watchmen knew her and kept silence as she passed; she reached the well-known path she had so often traced with Caphtor. All the past seemed as a dream. Every one of the beloved objects that were pleasant to her soul were gone. As the falling stars which darted bright across the heavens, and then for ever disappeared, so were the objects of her joy. She felt as if exiled from eternal providence, and throwing herself on the earth, inquired with strong cryings and tears, wherefore the Almighty contended with her. Her soul was now brought low, and her sins passed before her, till she acknowledged she had forgotten the rock of her salvation, and that the stroke was just. It was long since she had thus humbled herself under the mighty hand of God. When her husband was first taken from her some murmuring thoughts arose, and after a time, her vagrant affections settled on her child; they were never raised to heaven, for her treasure was still upon earth, and her solicitude, her hopes, and her desires were there likewise.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SHE now arose from the ground, and turning aside from the path where this mental vision had arrested her thoughts, ascended higher up the mountain, absorbed in the insufficiency and instability of earthly happiness, and

again beginning to gain some glimmering view of that unsorrowing world from which her sight had so long been averted.

She had wandered on some way, and had just heard the keepers of the city give the third watch of the night, when her attention was surprised by the sound of many voices rising in praise to their Creator. No music had ever so touched her; her mind became expanded by devotion, and there was one voice that reached her soul, and filled her with a comfort she had never known till then. She advanced nearer and nearer, cautiously concealing herself from observation, and walking under the shadow of the mountain, till she got close to the person from whose lips those heavenly consolations fell. The moon was shining full upon him with a radiance scarcely less mild than that which beamed from his heavenly countenance. He was a man of stature, somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend aspect, such as the beholders might both fear and love. His hair was parted after the manner of the Nazarites, and hung waving about his shoulders; his look was innocent, his eye awful yet courteous, and beaming with the mercy it was uplifted to implore. A man for his beauty surpassing the children of men. Many others were gathered round him, who looked like the disciples of such a master.

Sephora knew not who these could be, but she felt their prayer enter into her soul, and was for a time so completely raised above her earthly sorrows, that she thought they would never again have power to distress her.

These exalted feelings were not, however, of any long continuance, for when she descended from Mount Hermon, and on entering again the gates of the stately mansion, heard the minstrel's too familiar sounds of woe, nature had its turn and wept abundantly. She flew to

the chamber of death to look once more on her child, but he was not there, and she was directed to the banqueting room, where Keroob had had his body removed to surround it with all those pompous mockeries which reveal that pride they should hide from man. With faltering and disordered steps she entered the spacious chamber. It was filled with mourners sitting low on the ground, and in the centre lay the youthful Zina, extended on his costly bier. Like a frail blossom struck untimely to the earth by the burning wind of the desert, thus, "blasted by death the beautiful ruin lay." Many a fair and mournful flower was strewed around him, but none so fair, so mournful as himself. As she bent over this piteous scene, all the ways of his childhood passed before her, his first uncertain steps, his lisping tongue, his still expanding mind, his filial love, his confidence in heaven. Her laboring heart could bear no more, but clasping his vacant form, "Oh, my son, would to God I had died for thee, Oh, Zina, my son, my son!" The mourners rose up to comfort her, and the most honorable of the city, seeing that her grief would only gather strength by indulgence, approached the bier and raising it up moved slowly forward. Sephora followed, bare-headed and weeping, yet feeling who it was that required her child, and while she could not but remember "such things were that were most dear to her," said she, "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

The burying ground lay in a garden beyond the gates, and as the mournful procession passed through the city, many joined it, and all sorrowed for the disconsolate Sephora. But of what avail was their sorrow? It could not lesson hers, neither was she conscious of the sympathy she excited; her tearful eyes were bent to the ground, and she felt that every step was bringing her nearer to that insatiable and gloomy sepulchre that was triumph-

antly calling for its last and fairest prey. She was now within a few paces of those gates through which she had followed her beloved Caphtor. She entered, and passed the melancholy portals, a solemn dread ran through her soul—when next she should pass them, even the outward form of her child would be hidden from her view, and she solitary as the wanderer in the wilderness. Her laboring heart heaved with the agonizing thought when she heard a voice saying to her “weep not.” She raised her eyes, it was that heavenly stranger whose accents had before reached her soul. If divine compassion ever shone complete in human form she beheld it now. All were awed by his gracious presence. He laid his hand on the bier, and they that bear it stood still. Then turning to the corpse of Zina, he said in a voice of gentle majesty, “Young man, I say unto thee arise.” Scarce were the words pronounced ere the rigid features all relaxed with life—the mantling blood flew to the livid lip and palid cheek, light to the motionless and gelid eye, and strength to the emaciated, worn-down form.

Zina immediately comprehended that the power which had at first given him life, could alone remand it to its forsaken clay, raised himself on his bier, bowed his head and worshiped. The heavenly stranger took him by the hand, and with a look of ineffable benignity led him to his mother, who, overcome by joy and wonder, had fallen back in the arms of the mourners. What words can speak her happiness? That her beloved son was restored, formed but an insignificant part of her joy, for the goodness of the Almighty had passed before her, and the feelings of the mother were absorbed in the holy rapture of the child of God. The prediction of the dying Nic-nor returned to her mind. “The son of righteousness had indeed arisen with healing in his wings,” and as she fell at her Saviour’s feet, she acknowledged him as the

desired and long expected Messiah—the consolation of Israel; the Saviour king.

The report of Zina's restoration flew to Keroob's house, and the aged mourner was led forth to meet him. Who could imagine but he must catch the voice of the glorifying multitude, believe the words of the reanimated Zina, and now, indeed, worship God in spirit and in truth. But no, those who hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. He acknowledged, indeed, the greatness of the miracle, but fully persuaded that it was wrought in consequence of his almsgiving, fasting, and prayers, he resolved to continue steadfast in the old course, and prided himself upon not being led away by any of those notions that were making such a commotion in his city.

From this time the world and all its transitory joys, appeared to Sephora as a very little thing, and the feverish hours of earthly happiness were but as a sickly dream, by which she wished no longer to be entranced. By her desire, Zina followed the steps of his heavenly master, while she remained at Nain feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the feeble-minded, instructing the ignorant, bearing with unwearied patience and kindness the infirmities of Keroob, and striving in all things to serve and glorify her God.

Her inward consolations were so great that nature scarcely dared to murmur at any of the privations she underwent. The thought of the end of her pilgrimage strengthened her to undergo all the fatigues of it; and when she followed the "footsteps of the flock into the land of spirits," the portals of heaven were thrown open before her, and the dark valley of death became illuminated to her view.

## NOTES.

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*Note referred to in page 95.*

“From the top of Tabor you have a prospect, which, if nothing else, well rewards the labor of ascending it. It is impossible for men’s eyes to behold a higher gratification of this nature. On the north-west you discern at a distance the Mediterranean ; and, all around, you have the spacious and beautiful plains of Esdraelon and Galilee. At the bottom of Tabor, westward, stands Daborah, a small village, supposed by some to take its name from Deborah, that famous judge and deliverer of Israel. Near this valley is the fountain of Kishon. Not many leagues distant, eastward, you see Mount Hermon ; at the foot of which, is seated Nain, famous for our Lord’s raising the Widow’s Son there, and Endor, the place where dwelt the Witch consulted by Saul and his sons. Due east, you discover the sea of Tiberias, distant about one day’s journey ; and close by that sea they show a steep mountain, down which, the swine ran, and perished in the waters. A few points towards the north, appears what they call the Mount of the Beatitudes ; a small rising, from which our blessed Saviour delivered his Sermon in V, VI, and VII chapters of St. Matthew.

Not far from this little hill is the city of Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. It stands upon a very eminent and conspicuous mountain, and is seen far and near. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city in those words of his sermon,—“a city set on a hill cannot be hid.”

From Mount Tabor you have likewise the sight of a place which they tell you was Dothaim, where Joseph was sold by his brethren ; and of the field where our blessed Saviour fed the multitude with a few loaves and fishes.

Having received great satisfaction in the sight of this Mountain, we returned to the convent the same way that we came.”—MAUNDRELL’S *Journey*, page 154.

“To the north appeared snowy summits, towering beyond a series of intervening mountains with unspeakable greatness. We considered them to be the summits of Libanus, but the Arabs belonging to our caravan called the principal eminence *Jebel el Sieh*, \* saying it was near Damascus ; probably, therefore, a part of the

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\* According to D’Anville, *Jebel el Sieh* is the original name for the whole chain of *Anti Libanus*, identified by Jerom with the scriptural Hermon.

chain of Libanus. This summit was so lofty, that the snow entirely covered the upper part of it; not lying in patches, as, during the summer, upon the tops of some elevated mountains; but investing all the higher part with that perfect white and smooth velvet-like appearance, which snow only exhibits when it is very deep: a striking spectacle in such a climate, where the beholder, seeking protection from a burning sun, almost believes the firmament to be on fire."—CLARKE'S *Travels in the Holy Land*, page 459.

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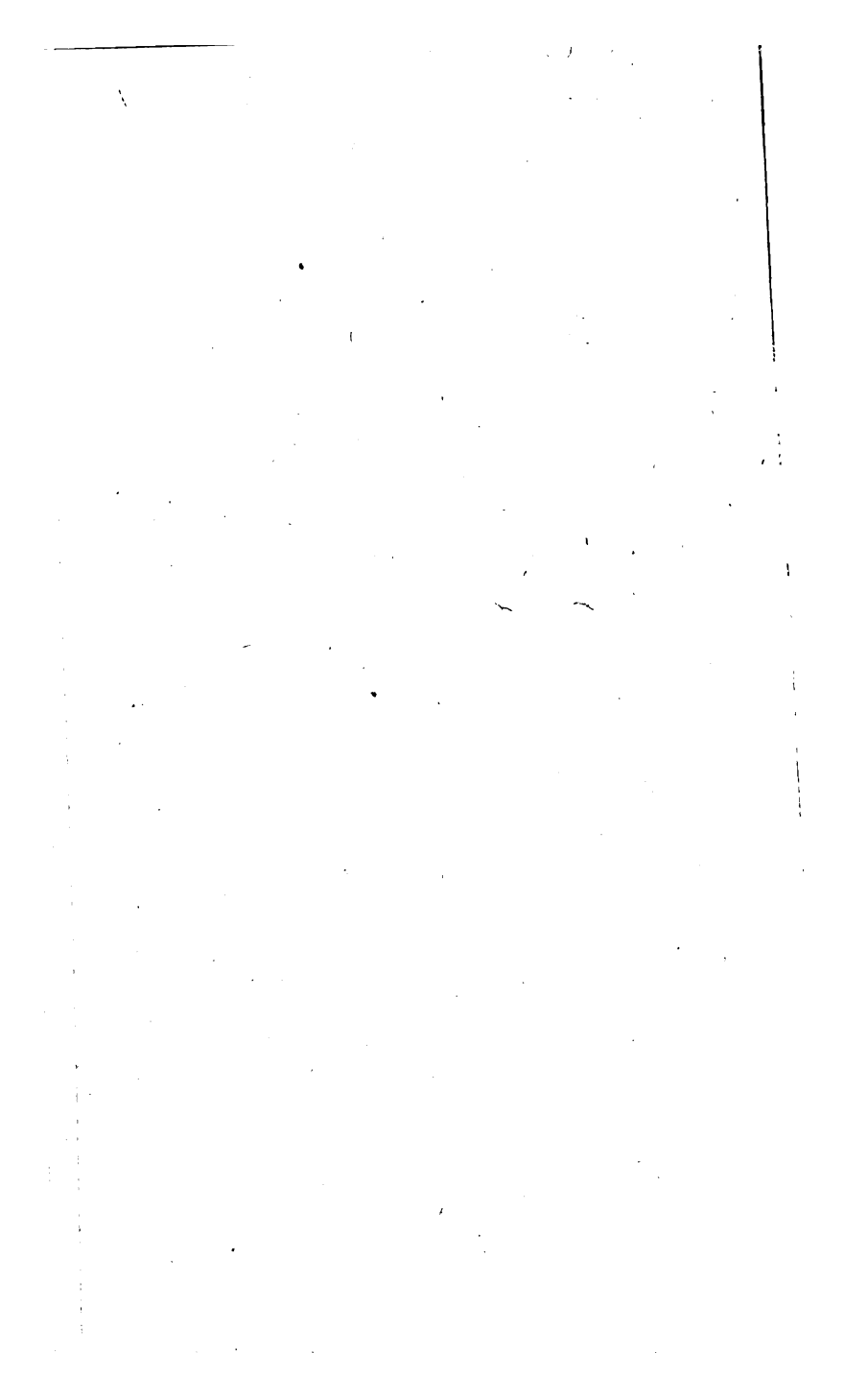
*Note referred to in page 163.*

Bishop PATRICK, in his Commentary on 2 Samuel, xiv: 26, has these remarks:—"In those days hair was accounted a great ornament, and the longer in was, the more was it esteemed. In after ages, art was used to make it grow, and grow thick. They also anointed their hair with fragrant oils, of myrrh and cinnamon, and then powdered it with dust of gold, all which made it very ponderous. Josephus informs us that such ostentation was in use among the Jews; for speaking of the guard which attended Solomon with long flowing hair about their shoulders, he says, 'they scattered in their hair every day little particles of gold, which made their hair shine and sparkle by the reflection of the rays of the sun upon it.' These circumstances may in some measure account for the great weight of Absalom's hair."

J.L.  
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